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THIRD SERIES:

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WILLIAM IV.

49° VICTORIÆ, 1886.

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TO

THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF APRIL 1886.

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Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "Country," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "to take the necessary steps with a view to the establishment of a Penny Postage system throughout the British Empire,"—(*Mr. James Hutton,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 127, Noes 258; Majority 131.—(Div. List, No. 52.)

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Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 125, Noes 237; Majority 112.

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[12.15.]

LORDS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31.

Their Lordships met,—and the Royal Assent being given to three Bills

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COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31.

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Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord President of the Council, Earl Spencer*) 426

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Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 29th March*] [*Second Night*] .. 458

After long time spent therein, Committee report Progress ; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill [Bill 155]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. John Morley*) 566

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

Prison Officers' Superannuation Bill [Bill 154]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Edward J. Reed*) 576

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to* :— Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill [Bill 26]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 23rd March*] 577

After short time spent therein, Committee report Progress ; to sit again *To-morrow.*

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Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Henry H. Fowler*) ; *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 161] .. 583

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[2.30.]

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Parliament—Private Bills—Standing Order, No. 128—Resolution—
Memorandum respecting Standing Order, No. 128. (No interest out of capital to be paid on calls) laid on the Table.
Moved, "That the same be printed,"—(*The Earl of Redesdale, Chairman of Committees*) 583
Motion *agreed to*:—Memorandum laid on the Table, and to be *printed*. (No. 56.)

Harbours of Refuge (Great Britain and Ireland)—Address for Returns—Address for,
"Returns of monies advanced on loan within the last five years towards the construction and improvement of large and small harbours of refuge in Great Britain and Ireland,"—(*The Viscount Sidmouth*) 584
After short debate, Address *agreed to*.

Colonies—Motion for an Address—
Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for all papers addressed to the Colonial Office during the last twelve months in favour of State-directed colonization, as well as any papers addressed to the Colonial Office requesting that official information for those who desire to become colonists should be supplied to the post offices and local authorities throughout the country,"—(*The Earl of Harrowby*) 587
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ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—MILITIA OFFICERS—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 608

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

FOREIGN TRADE COMPETITION—Resolution—Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, the Government ought to consider the desirability of appointing properly qualified Diplomatic Agents in all Foreign capitals or seats of Government, for the express purpose of promoting the extension of British commerce,"—(*Mr. M'Laren,*)—instead thereof 609

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Original Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," again proposed:—

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—DEPRESSION OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—OUTDOOR RELIEF—Observations, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers):—Short debate thereon 644

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*:—Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (No. 2) Bill [Bill 147]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 645

Bill *reported,* without Amendment; read the third time, and *passed.*

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill [Bill 27]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Addison,*)—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* 645

After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 101, Noes 41; Majority 60.—(Div. List, No. 59.)

Infants Bill [Bill 139]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Attorney General*) 650

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

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Places of Worship Sites Bill [Bill 136]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. J. E. Ellis*) .. 652

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Beresford Hope.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:" —After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill [Bill 74]

Bill *considered* in Committee 655

After short time spent therein, Bill *reported*, without Amendment; to be read the third time upon *Monday* next.

Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children) Bill [Bill 157]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Conybeare*) .. 656

After long debate, Question put:—The House *divided*; Ayes 132, Noes 115; Majority 17.—(Div. List, No. 60.)

Bill *committed* for *Tuesday* 13th April.

Parliamentary Franchise Bill [Bill 124]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Moulton*) .. 697

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir Henry James*:)— After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE—

Select Committee *appointed*, "to re-consider the plans and proposals for an Admiralty and a War Office:"—That it be an Instruction to the Committee to report whether some or all of the existing buildings of the Admiralty may not with advantage be retained,—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*) [1.0.]

LORDS, MONDAY, APRIL 5.

ZEBEHR PASHA—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That the time has come when, under certain conditions, the presence of Zebehr Pasha in the Sûdan might prove valuable in the interests of Egypt and the pacification of the Sûdan provinces,"—(*The Lord Ribblesdale*) 703

After short debate, on Question? *Resolved* in the *negative*.

IRELAND—THE LEGISLATIVE UNION—PETITION OF GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND PRESENTED—

Moved, "That the said Petition be read by the Clerk,"—(*The Earl of Courtown*) 720

Motion *agreed to*:—Petition read accordingly, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Compensation for Damages Bill (No. 50)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a},"—(*The Paymaster General, Lord Thurlow*) 721

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow*. [6.0.]

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—o—

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—TEMPLEPORT, CO. CAVAN—Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 722

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—o—

Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill [Bill 118]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 1st April*] [*Third Night*] .. 761

After long time spent therein, Committee report Progress.

Moved, "That the Committee sit again To-morrow at Two of the clock,"—(*The Lord Advocate*) 869

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill [Bill 155]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 873

After some time spent therein, Bill *reported*; as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

Cape Race Lighthouse Bill [Bill 151]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 893

After short time spent therein, Bill *reported*, without Amendment.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read the third time,"—(*The Secretary to the Board of Trade, Mr. C. T. D. Acland*:)—Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read the third time, and *passed*.

Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment Bill [Bill 161]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler*) 896

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *commited* for *To-morrow*.

Infants Bill [Bill 139]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved*, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bryce*) 897

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill considered in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday*.

Police Forces Enfranchisement Bill [Bill 3]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved*, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson*) 897

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill *considered* in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday*.

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill [Bill 74]

Moved, "That the Bill be now read the third time,"—(*Mr. Theodore Fry*) 898

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "now read the third time," in order to insert the word "re-committed,"—(*Mr. Tomlinson*,)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Main Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read the third time, and *passed*.

MOTIONS.

Medical Act (1858) Amendment Bill—

Moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend 'The Medical Act, 1858,'"—(*The Vice President of the Council, Sir Lyon Playfair*) .. 898

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill *ordered* (*Sir Lyon Playfair, Mr. Mundella, The Lord Advocate*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 163.]

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE—

Resolved, That whenever the House shall meet at Two of the clock, the Sittings of the House shall be held subject to the Resolutions of the House of the 30th day of April 1869,—(*Mr. Arnold Morley.*) [2.45]

LORDS, TUESDAY, APRIL 6.

Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill (No. 53)—

Amendments *reported* (according to order) 900

Bill to be read 3ª on *Friday* next; and to be *printed* as amended. (No. 64.)

Marriages (Hours of Solemnization) Bill (No. 52)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Monk-Bretton*) .. 905

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Friday* next.

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Army (Annual) Bill (No. 55)—
Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee on the said Bill,"—(*The Under Secretary of State for War, Lord Sandhurst*) .. 906
After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—House in Committee.
Bill *reported*, without amendment; and to be read 3ª on *Thursday* next.

Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Duke of Saint Albans*); read 1ª (No. 62) 907

Church Patronage Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*); read 1ª (No. 63) 907

[6.15.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, APRIL 6.

MOTIONS.

Commons Regulation (Stoke) Provisional Order Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 164] .. 908

Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 165] .. 908

Commons Regulation and Inclosure (Totternhoe) Provisional Orders Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 166] 908

QUESTIONS.

IRELAND—GOVERNMENT LOANS FOR IRISH PURPOSES, 1840-1886—Questions, Mr. Albert Grey, Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 908

TRADE AND COMMERCE—THE MINERAL RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY—Question, Sir Edward Watkin; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 910

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CATHOLIC JURORS (MONAGHAN QUARTER SESSIONS)—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 910

COMMISSIONERS OF WOODS AND FORESTS—THE FOREST OF DEAN—Question, Mr. T. Blake; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 911

LIGHTHOUSE ILLUMINANTS—THE EXPERIMENTS AT SOUTH FORELAND—Question, Sir James Corry; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) 911

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—ALLEGED INTIMIDATION OF VOTERS AT KILVINE, CLAREMORRIS UNION—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 912

ROYAL COMMISSION ON ACCIDENTS IN MINES—SPECIMENS OF MINERS' SAFETY LAMPS—Question, Mr. Burt; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 913

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT—OUTDOOR EXAMINING OFFICERS—Question, Captain Cotton; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 913

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—VENTILATION OF THIS HOUSE—Questions, Mr. Duncombe, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answers, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) 914

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—KEW GARDENS—INCREASED SEATING ARRANGEMENTS—Question, Mr. Howard Spensley; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) 914

TRADE MARKS—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) .. 914

ADMIRALTY—EDUCATION OF NAVAL EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 915

SOUTH AFRICA—AFFAIRS OF ZULULAND—Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) 915

NAVY—H.M.SS. "IMPERIEUSE" AND "WARSPITE"—Question, Sir John Commerell; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) .. 916

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—BOGUS OUTRAGE AT CASTLECAULFIELD, CO. TYRONE—CASE OF ROBERT CUDDY, JUNIOR—Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 916

LOCAL BANKRUPTCY COURTS, IRELAND—Question, Mr. De Cobain; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) 917

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—SCHOOL ATTENDANCE—Question, Sir Charles Forster; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 917

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE OATHS BILL—Question, Mr. Serjeant Simon; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 918

THE IRISH CHURCH FUND—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, Mr. Speaker 918

ORDER OF THE DAY:

—o—

Crofters Scotland (No. 2) Bill [Bill 118]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 5th April*] [*Fourth Night*] .. 918

After long time spent therein, it being ten minutes before Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress; Committee to sit again upon *Friday*.

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER—Observations, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), Sir Michael Hicks-Beach .. 975

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

[House counted out] [9.5.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—MEMBERS' SEATS IN THIS HOUSE—Observations, Mr. Mitchell Henry; Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, Mr. Speaker 978

MOTION.

—o—

IPSWICH WRIT—

Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of Two Members to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Ipswich, in the room of Henry Wyndham West, esquire, one of Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the Law, and Jesse Collings, esquire, whose Election hath been determined to be void,"—(*The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Arnold Morley*) 979

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Brand:*)—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 16, Noes 175; Majority 159.—(Div. List, No. 69.)

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Church Patronage Bill [Bill 4]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Leatham*) .. 989

After long debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* next.

Waterworks (Rating) Bill [Bill 117]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. G. Balfour*) .. 1027

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Addison.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:" —After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"— (*Mr. Jackson*:)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *Tuesday* 25th May.

Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill [Bill 155]—

Bill, as amended, *considered* 1030

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

MINES—ACCIDENTS IN COAL MINES—Questions, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Tomlinson; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Broadhurst) 1031

NEW WRITS—

Resolved, That, in all cases where the Seat of any Member has been declared void on the ground of corrupt practices or illegal practices, no Motion for the issue of a New Writ shall be made without two days' previous Notice in the Votes, and that such Notice be considered before Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions,"—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

Metropolitan Fire Brigade Expenses Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Kimber, Mr. Vanderbyl*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 167] 1031

Friendly Societies (Transmission of Money) Bill—*Ordered* (*Viscount Curzon, Sir E. Birkbeck, Mr. Fellowes, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Tomlinson*): *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 168] 1031

Metropolitan Police (Stations) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 169] .. 1032

[5.55.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, APRIL 8.

Lunacy (Vacating of Seats) Bill (No. 47)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Balfour of Burleigh*) 1032

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

Prison Officers' Superannuation Bill (No. 61)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Paymaster General, Lord Thurlow*) 1033

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

Compensation for Damages Bill (No. 50)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3ª,"—(*The Paymaster General, Lord Thurlow*) 1033

Motion *agreed to.*

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Compensation for Damages Bill—continued.

On Question, That the Bill do pass?
Amendments made; Bill *passed* and sent to the Commons, and to be *printed*, as amended. (No. 68.) [4.45.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, APRIL 8.

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS (KENNINGTON DIVISION OF THE BOROUGH OF LAMBETH)— 1034

MOTIONS.

PARLIAMENT—ORDERS OF THE DAY—

Moved, "That the Notice of Motion relating to the Government of Ireland have precedence of the Orders of the Day,"—(*Mr. Gladstone*) .. 1035
After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*.

Government of Ireland Bill [FIRST NIGHT]—

Moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the provision for the future Government of Ireland,"—(*Mr. Gladstone*) 1036
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. J. Chamberlain*:)—
—Motion *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

International and Colonial Copyright Bill [Bill 156]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Bryce*) .. 1142
After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday* next.

Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment) Bill [Bill 123]—

Bill, as amended, *considered* 1144
Bill to be read the third time upon *Wednesday* next.

MOTIONS.

NATIONAL PROVIDENT INSURANCE—

Select Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee 1145

Church Sites (Compulsory Powers Repeal) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Francis. Powell, Mr. John Talbot, Mr. Addison*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 171] .. 1145
[12.45.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, APRIL 9.

Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill (No. 28)—

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee on the said Bill,"—(*The Earl of Elgin*) 1145
Moved, "That it is inexpedient that the House should so resolve itself until such time as the measure promised by Her Majesty's Government for the establishment of county government boards has been presented to Parliament, in view of the possible changes that may thus be effected in the administration of the police force in Scotland,"—(*The Earl of Galloway.*)
Amendment *negatived*:—House in Committee.
Amendments made; the Report thereof to be received on *Tuesday* next; and Bill to be *printed*, as amended. (No. 69.)

ARMY (EDUCATION)—ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGES, SANDHURST AND WOOLWICH—REPORT OF BOARD OF VISITORS—Question, Observations, Viscount Enfield; Reply, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Sandhurst) 1150

Contagious Diseases Acts (Repeal) (No. 2) Bill (No. 58)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Under Secretary of State for War, Lord Sandhurst*) 1151

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill (No. 64)—

Third Reading *put off* to *Monday* next 1154

Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill (No. 66)—

The Right Hon. W. E. Forster—

On the Order of the Day for the Second Reading of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill,

The Lord President of the Council expressed the regret of himself and his Colleagues on the death of the Right Hon. William Edward Forster, formerly Chief Secretary for Ireland.

Earl Cowper, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when Mr. Forster held the Office of Chief Secretary, expressed his concurrence in this eulogy of the deceased.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord President of the Council, Earl Spencer*) 1155

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next. [6.15.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, APRIL 9.

QUESTIONS.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—DEPORTATION OF PAUPERS FROM SCOTLAND—CASE OF MRS. JANE CARROLL—Question, Mr. Donal Sullivan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1158

THE THAMES CONSERVANCY BOARD—FERRY AT GREENWICH—Question, Mr. Ernest Denison; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) 1158

ARREARS OF RENT (IRELAND) ACT, 1882—CASE OF MR. TEMPLEMAN, AGENT TO MRS. ARMSTRONG—Questions, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Tottenham; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1159

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—CAPTAINS OF MILITIA SERVING AT DEPÔTS—Question, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1160

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—THE SCULPTURES IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM—Question, Mr. Ashton; Answer, Sir John Lubbock 1160

COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—PUPIL TEACHERS—Question, Mr. Peter M'Donald; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1161

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE MONAGHAN JURY PANEL—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1161

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—"LLOYD *v.* SHAW"—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1162

EMIGRANTS TO THE COLONIES—ASSISTED PASSAGES—Question, Mr. Baumann; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) 1162

SOUTH AFRICA—ZULULAND—USIBEPU—Question, Mr. Baumann; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) 1163

POST OFFICE (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—PREPAYMENT OF MESSAGES TO THE CONTINENT—Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1164

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Public Meetings (Ireland)—Attendance of Civil Servants—Mr. George Hill Smith—Question, Mr. Alexander Blane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1164

Palace of Westminster—House of Commons—Safety Matches in the Smoking Room—Question, Mr. Pyne; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) 1165

Building Societies Act, 1874—Advances on Property in Ireland by Building Societies—Question, Mr. O'Neill; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1165

Mercantile Marine—The Employment of Foreign Sailors—Question, Mr. Addison; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1166

India—The Cinchona Bark Trade—Question, Mr. Lewis McIver; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) 1166

Army (Auxiliary Forces)—The Militia and Yeomanry—Vacant Commissions—Question, Colonel Waring; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1667

Navy—Egyptian Medals for the Royal Marine Battalion—Question, Captain Price; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 1167

The Sugar Refiners—Deputation to the Board of Trade—Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1168

Gold and Silver—Hall-Marking Watches—Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) .. 1168

Poor Law (Ireland)—Donegal Board of Guardians—Questions, Mr. Bernard Kelly, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1169

Naval Engineer Students—Report of the Director of Naval Education—Question, Sir Thomas Brassey; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 1170

Law and Justice (Wales)—Welsh-Speaking Judges—Question, Mr. W. Abraham (Glamorgan, Rhondda); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1171

Copyright—The Berne Conference—Question, Mr. Agnew; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) .. 1172

Belgium—Recent Disturbances—Question, Mr. Addison; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) .. 1172

Literature, Science, and Art—Antiquities at the British Museum—Question, Mr. W. F. Lawrence; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H Fowler) 1173

Parliament—Galleries of this House—Accommodation for Colonial Ministers and Members of Legislatures—Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) .. 1174

Trade and Commerce—Commercial Reports of Consuls General and Consuls—Question, Mr. Lawrence Baker; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) 1174

Army—Case of Sergeant Thomas Mackie, Canteen Sergeant at Fort George, N.B.—Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1175

Law and Justice (Scotland)—Malicious Mischief—Case of William Stokes and William Macdonald, Duthil—Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) .. 1175

Navy—State of the Navy—Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 1176

South-Eastern Europe—Bulgaria—Question, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) 1177

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—BOARDING-OUT OF PAUPER CHILDREN—Question, Mr. William Davies; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) 1177

IRELAND—THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST—Question, Mr. Alexander Blane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1178

ORDERS OF THE DAY—ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—

Standing Order No. 20, appointing the Committee of Supply, to be the First Order on Friday, read 1179

Moved, "That the said Standing Order be suspended,"—(*The First Lord of the Treasury, Mr. W. E. Gladstone:*)—After short debate, Motion *agreed to.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Government of Ireland Bill [ADJOURNED DEBATE] [SECOND NIGHT]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [8th April:]—Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 1181

After long debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Lord Randolph Churchill:*)—After further short debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill [Bill 26]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress* 1*st April*] 1279

After short time spent therein, Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Tuesday* next. [1.0.]

LORDS, MONDAY, APRIL 12.

Trees (Ireland) Bill (No. 42)—

House in Committee (according to Order) 1284

Amendments made; the Report thereof to be received on *Thursday* next; and Bill to be *printed,* as amended. (No. 72.)

Army (Annual) Bill (No. 55)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3ª,"—(*The Under Secretary of State for War, Lord Sandhurst*) 1284

After short debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read 3ª, and *passed.*

Marriages (Hours of Solemnization) Bill (No. 52)—

House in Committee (according to Order) 1285

An Amendment made; the Report thereof to be received *To-morrow;* and Bill to be *printed,* as amended. (No. 73.)

GREAT BRITAIN—CULTIVATION OF TOBACCO—Question, Lord Harris; Answer, Lord Sudeley (for the Treasury) 1286

Electric Lighting Acts (1882) Amendment (Nos. 1, 2, & 3) Bills (Nos. 25, 40, & 48)—

Select Committee *nominated:*—List of the Committee 1287

Moved, "That all petitions presented before the 15th instant against the said Bills be referred to the Committee, and that the petitioners have leave to be heard before the Committee by their counsel, agents, and witnesses in support of the allegations of their petitions,"—(*The Lord Grimthorpe.*)

Amendment *moved,*

To leave out all the words after the first ("Committee") and insert ("and that the Committee have leave to hear such of the petitioners as they think fit by their counsel, agents, and witnesses,"—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

Electric Lighting Acts (1882) *Amendment* (*Nos.* 1, 2, *&* 3) *Bills*—continued.

After short debate, Amendment *moved*,

To leave out ("before the 15th instant") and insert ("on or before the first sitting day after the recess at Easter,")—(*The Lord Houghton.*)

After short debate, on Question? *agreed to*:—Motion, as amended, *agreed to*.

Ordered, That all petitions presented on or before the first sitting day after the recess at Easter against the said Bills be referred to the Committee, and that the Committee have leave to hear such of the petitioners as they think fit by their counsel, agents, and witnesses.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER NO. 128)—(NO INTEREST OUT OF CAPITAL TO BE PAID ON CALLS UNDER RAILWAY BILLS)—

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether it is expedient to amend Standing Order No. 128, and, if so, in what respect; and That no Bill containing provision for payment of interest out of capital during construction of works be read a second time before the Report of the said Committee has been laid upon the Table,"—(*The Lord Houghton*) 1291

Motion *agreed to*; and ordered accordingly.

Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland) Bill (No. 36)—

House in Committee (according to Order) 1291

An Amendment made; the Report thereof to be received *To-morrow*.

Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill (No. 51)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Lord FitzGerald*) .. 1292

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2^a accordingly.

PARLIAMENT—ADJOURNMENT—THE EASTER HOLIDAYS—Observation, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Earl Granville) 1295

[7.15.]

COMMONS, MONDAY, APRIL 12.

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS (TOWER HAMLETS, STEPNEY DIVISION)—Certificate and Report of the Election Judges 1296

QUESTIONS.

THE METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS—THAMES CROSSINGS—Questions, Mr. Ritchie; Answers, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) 1297

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—RELIGIOUS STATISTICS OF PROMOTIONS—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1298

CHARITABLE TRUSTS—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. Macdonald Cameron; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1299

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—KEW GARDENS—Question, Mr. Macdonald Cameron; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) 1299

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS—LISTS OF VOTERS—ST. PANCRAS PARISH—Question, Mr. Baggallay; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) 1300

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)—THE FISHERMEN OF BALLANTRAE—DAMAGE TO NETS, &C. BY BEAM TRAWLERS—Question, Mr. Wason; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1301

POOR LAW (SCOTLAND)—DEATH FROM EXPOSURE OF ANN MACKINNAN, AT DERRAIG, ISLE OF MULL—Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1301

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ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—DISTRICT INSPECTOR DUNNE, CO. MONAGHAN—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1302

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—THE POLICE BARRACK AT KILLEAGH, CO. CORK—Question, Mr. Lane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1303

MUNICIPAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS—POST OFFICE SERVANTS—Question, Mr. A. J. Balfour; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1303

JUDICATURE ACT (IRELAND)—COURT FEES—Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1304

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS—THE RATHDRUM BOARD OF GUARDIANS—CASE OF PETER GIBSON—Questions, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1304

ARMY (PENSIONERS)—CASE OF JOHN GORMAN, OF MALLOW—Question, Mr. W. O'Brien; Answer, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Herbert Gladstone) 1305

NAVY—TORPEDO BOATS—Question, Mr. Gourley; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 1306

NAVY—H.M.S. "ALBATROSS"—EXPLOSION OF A NORDENFELT GUN—Question, Lord Charles Beresford; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 1306

LIGHTHOUSES—REGULATIONS, JANUARY 29—Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) .. 1306

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—EMIGRATION OF ORPHAN AND DESERTED CHILDREN—Question, Mr. Seton-Karr; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) 1307

LAW AND POLICE—TREATMENT OF PRISONERS, DURHAM—Question, Mr. Milvain; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1308

LAW AND POLICE—SUNDAY TRADING IN THE EAST OF LONDON—Question, Mr. Shirley; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1309

ARMY—GRIEVANCES OF QUARTERMASTERS—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1309

ARMY — CHELSEA HOSPITAL — ARMY PENSIONERS — Question, Captain M'Calmont; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1310

PORTUGAL—ARREST OF MISSIONARIES IN MADEIRA—Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) 1310

SOLVENCY OF THE IRISH CHURCH FUND—Questions, Sir George Campbell; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) .. 1311

INLAND REVENUE—ASSISTANTS OF EXCISE—Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) .. 1312

FISHINGS AND FORESHORES (SCOTLAND)—THE RETURN—Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1312

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL—Questions, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) .. 1313

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—MEMBERS' SEATS IN THIS HOUSE—Questions, Mr. Bartley, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Mitchell Henry; Answers, Mr. Speaker, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) .. 1315

MR. HOWELL AND MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK—Personal Explanation, Mr. Howell; Observations, Mr. Cavendish Bentinck 1316

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Government of Ireland Bill [Adjourned Debate] [Third Night]—
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [8th April:]—Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 1316
After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir William Harcourt*:)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

MOTIONS

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 172] .. 1416
Local Government Provisional Orders Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 173] 1416
Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 174] .. 1417
Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 175] .. 1417
Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 3) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 176] .. 1417
Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 4) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 177] .. 1417
Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 5) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 178] .. 1418
Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 6) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 179] .. 1418
County Courts (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Small, Mr. James E. O'Doherty, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. O'Hea*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 180] 1418
[12.45.]

LORDS, TUESDAY, APRIL 13.

EASTERN ROUMELIA—Question, The Marquess of Salisbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Earl of Rosebery) .. 1419

Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill (No. 69)—
Amendments *reported* (according to Order) 1420
Further Amendments made; and Bill to be read 3ª on *Thursday* next.

IRELAND (REPRESSION OF CRIME)—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—
Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for a Return, from 1830 to the present time, of all coercion Bills (by whatever title they may be called) passed by Parliament, and by whom they were proposed: Also, a Return of agrarian crime committed 18 months previous to, and 18 months after, the passing of the said Acts,"—(*The Lord Oranmore and Browne*) 1421
After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*. [5.0.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, APRIL 13.

QUESTIONS.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CLERK OF THE PEACE, LONDONDERRY—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1424
POOR LAW (IRELAND)—BELFAST UNION WORKHOUSE—ABSENCE OF OFFICERS FROM DUTY—Question, Mr. Alexander Blane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1424

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COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION AT CAIRNDAISY, CO. LONDONDERRY — Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1425

BUILDING, &C. SOCIETIES—LOTTERY BALLOT—Question, Mr. Seale-Hayne; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1426

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE NEW PRISON AT NORWICH—Question, Mr. Colman; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1427

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE IN THIS HOUSE—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) 1427

POST OFFICE—THE PARCEL POST—PAY OF CARRIERS—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1428

PUBLIC OFFICES—THE NEW ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE—Question, Mr. T. Blake; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) .. 1428

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS — Question, Colonel Gunter; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1429

MERCHANT SHIPPING — LOSS OF THE "ENTERPRIZE" — Question, Mr. Esslemont; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) .. 1429

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (IRELAND)—THE SCIENCE AND ART DIRECTORY—RULE 12—Question, Mr. Bernard Kelly; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1430

WEST INDIA ISLANDS—ST. VINCENT GRAMMAR SCHOOL—Question, Mr. Edmund Robertson; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) 1430

DISTRESS IN THE WESTERN ISLANDS (SCOTLAND)—Question, Mr. T. Blake; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1432

ARMY—WAR BALLOONS—Question, Sir Robert Fowler; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1433

LAW AND JUSTICE—REWARDS FOR DISCOVERY OF CRIME—Question, Mr. Shirley; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1433

BURIALS—ALLEGED SCANDAL AT TARPORLEY—Question, Mr. Carvell Williams; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1433

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—SEVERE SENTENCES—CASE OF ABIGAIL BIRD — Question, Mr. William Saunders; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) .. 1434

MERCHANT SHIPPING—ROBBERY OF FOREIGN SEAMEN AFTER BEING PAID OFF —Question, Captain Verney; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1435

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—CLERKS IN LOCAL PRISONS—Question, Mr. Bartley; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1436

STRIKES AND LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES—Question, Mr. Paulton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) 1436

CIVIL SERVICE VOLUNTEERS—Question, Lord Algernon Percy; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1437

METROPOLIS—CITY OF LONDON COURT—Question, Lord Algernon Percy; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1437

MOTION.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND ORDERS OF THE DAY—SALE AND PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) BILL—

Moved, "That the Order of the Day relating to the Government of Ireland have precedence of the Notices of Motions and the other Orders of the Day,"—(*Mr. Gladstone*) 1438

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Government of Ireland Bill—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [8th April:]—Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 1439

After long debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Gladstone*, *Mr. Secretary Childers*, *Mr. John Morley*, *Mr. Attorney General*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 181.]

Police Forces Enfranchisement Bill [Bill 3]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 1550

After some time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow*.

Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill [Bill 26]—

Bill, as amended, *considered* 1563

After short debate, Bill read the third time, and *passed*.

REFRESHMENT CHARGES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—

Select Committee *appointed*, "to inquire into the Refreshment Charges and Arrangements of the House,"—(*Mr. Biggar.*) [2.45.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL—

Second Reading *deferred* from Thursday 6th till Monday 10th May .. 1568

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS (GLOUCESTER COUNTY, SOUTHERN DIVISION)—Certificate and Report of the Election Judges 1568

QUESTION.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (SCOTLAND)—EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF TRAVELLING TINKERS—Question, Mr. Jacks; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1569

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Police Constables' Pensions Bill [Bill 28]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson*) 1570

After short debate, Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "statutory pensions granted by Parliament to the Police ought not to be provided by imposing fresh burdens on the ratepayers,"—(*Mr. Stanley Leighton*,)—instead thereof.

Police Constables' Pensions Bill—continued.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After further short debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson*:)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *Tuesday* 4th May.

Land Cultivation Bill [Bill 71]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh*) .. 1582
After debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*:—Bill *withdrawn*.

Solicitors' Annual Certificate Duty Bill [Bill 133]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. O'Hea*) .. 1612
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler*:) —Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

Beer Adulteration (No. 3) Bill [Bill 59]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Quilter*) .. 1612
Debate *adjourned* till *Wednesday* 12th May.

MOTIONS.

Medical Act (1858) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Morgan Howard, Sir Trevor Lawrence, Mr. Tomlinson, Mr. Addison*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 183] 1612

Fires Prevention (Metropolis) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Howard Spensley, Colonel Duncan, Mr. Spicer, Mr. Isaacs*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 184] .. 1612

Quarry Fencing Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Burt, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Abraham* (*Glamorgan, Rhondda*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 185] .. 1613
[5.50.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, APRIL 15.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER NO. 128)—
Select Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee 1613

Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill (No. 64)—
Bill read 3ª (according to Order) 1613
On Motion, "That the Bill do pass:"—After short debate, Bill *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

Bankruptcy (Agricultural Labourers' Wages) Bill (No. 70)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Earl of Harrowby*) .. 1614
Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House.

IRELAND — SPECIAL PROTECTIVE AND REPRESSIVE CRIMINAL LEGISLATION—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—
Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for a Return, from 1830 to the present time, of all special protective and repressive criminal legislation applicable to Ireland (by whatever named called), with the dates and names of proposers: Also a Return (so far as may be practicable) of all crimes, specifying conspiracy, sedition, murder, offences against the person, agrarian offences, arson, intimidation, &c., committed 12 months next before, and next after, the passing of the Act,"—(*The Lord Oranmore and Browne*) 1614
After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*. [5.30.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, APRIL 15.

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QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—LETTER CARRIERS—CASE OF SAMUEL LYONS—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1617
EDUCATION (IRELAND)—ST. GEORGE'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, LIMERICK—Question, Mr. H. J. Gill; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1619
LAW AND JUSTICE—CASE OF ABIGAIL BIRD—Question, Mr. Shirley; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1619
POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS AT ROCKCHAPEL, CO. CORK—Question, Mr. Flynn; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1620
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—ATTENDANCES—THE ENGLISH AND SCOTCH CODES—Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1620
POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—NOTTINGHAM—Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) 1621
CIVIL SERVICE—EMPLOYMENT OF DISCHARGED SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AND MARINES—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arnold Morley) 1622
LAW AND JUSTICE—THE GLASGOW EXPLOSION—PATRICK DUNN—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1622
INLAND REVENUE—BILL STAMPS—Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1623
EGYPT—DISPOSAL OF THE SUAKIN-BERBER RAILWAY MATERIAL—Question, Mr. John O'Connor (Kerry, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1623
THE WATCH TRADE — HALL-MARKING OF WATCH CASES — Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1624
POST OFFICE (TELEGRAMS)—INSUFFICIENTLY ADDRESSED TELEGRAMS—Question, Mr. Houldsworth; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1624
ARMY—COMPULSORY RETIREMENT OF MAJORS — Question, Lord Algernon Percy; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1625
THE ARMS ACT (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Lewis; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1626
SPAIN—COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS—Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) .. 1627
PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—SANITARY CONDITION—SEWER GAS — Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) 1627
PUBLIC OFFICES—THE NEW ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE—Question, Mr. T. Blake; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) .. 1627
RAILWAYS (SCOTLAND)—THE GIRVAN AND PORTPATRICK RAILWAY — Question, Mr. H. F. H. Elliot; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1628
NAVY—ARMED CRUISERS AND TRANSPORTS—Question, Mr. Forwood; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 1629
REVENUES AND ENDOWMENTS OF RELIGIOUS BODIES—Questions, Mr. Morgan Howard, Mr. Picton; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) 1629
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (NO. 2) BILL—Questions, Mr. A. J. Balfour, Sir George Campbell, Lord Randolph Churchill; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) .. 1630

House of Commons—Refreshment Charges and Arrangements—Observations, Sir William Hart Dyke; Reply, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) 1631

Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., Clerk of the House of Commons—Letter received by Mr. Speaker from the Right Hon. Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., the Clerk of this House 1631

Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, 1881 — Observations, Mr. Lewis; Reply, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley :) — Short debate thereon 1634

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WAYS AND MEANS—*considered* in Committee—Financial Statement—

(1.) *Moved,* That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, the Duties of Customs now chargeable upon Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say): on

Tea . . . the pound . . . Sixpence.

(2.) "That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Eight Pence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—

In England, the Duty of Four Pence;

In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Three Pence;

Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, and in section eight of "The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876," for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds.

(3.) "That it is expedient to amend the Laws relating to the Inland Revenue and Customs,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 1637

After long debate, Resolutions *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;* Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill [Bill 118]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 5th April*] [*Fifth Night*] .. 1716

After some time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

Post Office Sites Bill [Bill 148]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. C. R. Spencer*) 1747

Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee:—Committee to consist of Five Members, Three to be nominated by the House and Two by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented two clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.

Metropolitan Police Stations Bill [Bill 169]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, Mr. Broadhurst*) 1748

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

International and Colonial Copyright Bill [Bill 157]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved*, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bryce*) 1748

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill *considered* in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday* 6th May.

Infants Bill [Bill 139]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 5th April*] 1750

Moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Ince*:)—After short debate, Motion *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

Companies Acts Amendment Bill [Bill 158]—

Bill *considered* in Committee, and *reported*, without Amendment .. 1751

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

TITHE RENT-CHARGE (EXTRAORDINARY) AMENDMENT BILL—

Select Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee 1751

MOTIONS.

Cottagers' Allotment Gardens Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Chaplin, Sir William Hart Dyke, Colonel Harcourt, Viscount Curzon, Mr. Charles Hall*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 186] 1751

Terms of Removal (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 187] 1752

Returning Officers' Charges (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 188] .. 1752

Assistant County Surveyors (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Small, Mr. Marum, Mr. Conway, Mr. O'Hanlon*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 189] .. 1752

[1.45.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, APRIL 16.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS—

Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92. and 93. be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Easter, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the recess.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—DISCONTINUANCE OF NAAS GAOL—Question, Observations, The Earl of Milltown, The Earl of Longford; Replies, The Secretary of State for India (The Earl of Kimberley) 1752

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND—Observations, Lord Denman 1754

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (Public Health Act) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Earl of Kimberley*); read 1ª, and *referred* to the Examiners (No. 83) 1754

[5.0.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, APRIL 16.

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PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Cricklewood, Kilburn, and Harrow Road Tramways Bill (*by Order*)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Charles Forster*) 1755
Question put, and *agreed to*.
Moved, "That the Bill be committed,"—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

Amendment proposed,

To leave out the word "committed," in order to add the words "referred to a Select Committee, Five to be nominated by the House, and Four by the Committee of Selection,"—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton*,)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the word 'committed' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *committed*.

North Metropolitan Tramways (*No.* 1) *Bill* (*by Order*)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Charles Forster*) 1764
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton*:)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.
Original Question put:—Bill read a second time, and *committed*.

QUESTIONS.

BURMAH—SUPPLY OF WHITWORTH GUNS—Question, Mr. Gregory; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. Stafford Howard) .. 1765

ADMIRALTY—THE ROYAL MARINES—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) .. 1765

TRANSFER OF PROPERTY OF NONCONFORMIST BODIES — Question, Mr. Jones-Parry; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) .. 1766

PRISONS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1877—DISCHARGING OF PRISONERS AT BARLINNIE Question, Mr. Baird; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1766

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—"NAYE *v.* FINNIGAN AND FINNIGAN"—Question, Mr. Macartney; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1767

EDUCATION (IRELAND)—INDUSTRIAL AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS—TIPPERARY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1768

THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE—CONSULAR APPOINTMENTS—Question, Mr. James Hutton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) .. 1768

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — MR. FRANK BROOK, BROOKBOROUGH, CO. FERMANAGH—Question, Mr. William Redmond; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1769

MERCHANT SHIPPING — SEAMEN IN THE PORT OF LONDON — Question, Sir Robert Fowler; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) .. 1769

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE ATHENRY AND TUAM DAY MAIL—Question, Colonel Nolan; Answer, Mr. C. R. Spencer (Groom in Waiting) .. 1770

MERCHANT SHIPPING—TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH THE GOODWIN SANDS—Question, Mr. Fitzgerald; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) .. 1770

EGYPT—DISPOSAL OF THE SUAKIN AND BERBER RAILWAY MATERIAL—Question, Mr. John O'Connor (Tipperary, S.); Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) .. 1770

The Royal Irish Constabulary—Return of Cost of Each Rank—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1771

South-Eastern Europe—Turkey and Greece — Action of the Powers —Question, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) 1772

Parliament—Public Business—Questions, Mr. Carbutt, Mr. Macfarlane, Sir John Gorst; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) 1772

Reprint of the Act of Union—Questions, Mr. Raikes, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. O'Kelly, Mr. John O'Connor (Kerry, S.), Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) 1773

MOTIONS.

The Right Hon. Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., Clerk of this House—Resolution—

Moved, "That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the Right Honourable Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., on his retirement from the office of Clerk of this House, the assurance of its cordial respect and regard, together with its warm acknowledgment for the prolonged and singularly valuable services which, alike by his pen, his action, and his ever ready advice, he has rendered to this House, and to its Members, in the conduct of their business; joining therewith the expression of its earnest hope that the retirement rendered necessary by his indefatigable exertions may serve effectually for the restoration of his health,"—(*Mr. Gladstone*) 1774

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*, *nemine contradicente.*

Orders of the Day—

Standing Order No. 20, appointing the Committee of Supply to be the first Order of Friday, read.

Ordered, That the said Standing Order be suspended.

Ordered, That the Notice of Motion for leave to bring in a Bill relating to the Sale and Purchase of Land in Ireland have precedence of the Orders of the Day,—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland) Bill—

Moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make amended provision for the Sale and Purchase of Land in Ireland,"—(*The First Lord of the Treasury, Mr. W. E. Gladstone*) 1778

After long debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Attorney General*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 193.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Infants Bill [Bill 139]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress* 15*th April*] 1867

After short time spent therein, Bill *reported*; as amended, to be considered upon *Monday* next.

Highways Acts Amendment Bill [Bill 149]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved*, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Mr. Duckham*) 1877

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House will, upon this day six months, resolve itself into the said Committee,"—(*Mr. Brunner*,) —instead thereof.

Highways Acts Amendment Bill—continued.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 59, Noes 38; Majority 21.—(Div. List, No. 75.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill *considered* in Committee .. 1878

After short time spent therein, Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Monday* 3rd May.

MOTIONS.

WAYS AND MEANS—

Customs and Inland Revenue Bill } Resolutions [April 15] *reported*, and *agreed to:* —Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 190] 1880

National Debt Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 191] 1880

[1.45.]

LORDS.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR SCOTLAND.

FRIDAY, MARCH 26.

Earl of Mar, *v.* Viscount Strathallan.

Earl of Morton, *v.* Lord Saltoun.

NEW PEERS.

THURSDAY, APRIL 1.

The Right Honourable Richard de Aquila Grosvenor (commonly called Lord Richard de Aquila Grosvenor), created Lord Stalbridge of Stalbridge in the county of Dorset.

The Right Honourable William Baron Kensington, in that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland, created Baron Kensington of Kensington in the county of Middlesex.

COMMONS.

NEW WRITS ISSUED.

MONDAY, MARCH 29.

For *Borough of Barrow-in-Furness*, *v.* David Duncan, esquire, void Election.

TUESDAY, MARCH 30.

For *Halifax*, *v.* The Right Hon. James Stansfeld, President of the Local Government Board.

FRIDAY, APRIL 2.

For *the City of Norwich*, *v.* Harry Bullard, esquire, void Election.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7.

For *the Borough of Ipswich*, *v.* Henry Wyndham West, esquire, one of Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the Law, and Jesse Collings, esquire, void Election.

NEW WRITS ISSUED—*continued.*

TUESDAY, APRIL 13.

For *North-East Lancashire* (*Clitheroe Division*), *v.* Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, baronet, Chancellor of the Duchy and County Palatine of Lancaster.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14.

For *Bradford* (*Central Division*), *v.* The Right Honble. William Edward Forster, deceased.

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

MONDAY, MARCH 29.

Chester County (*Altrincham Division*)—Sir William Cunliffe Brooks, baronet.

MONDAY, APRIL 5.

Halifax—Right Honble. James Stansfeld.

THURSDAY, APRIL 8.

Flint County—Samuel Smith, esquire.
Norwich—Samuel Hoare, esquire.
Barrow-in-Furness—William Sproston Caine, esquire.

FRIDAY, APRIL 16.

Borough of Ipswich—Charles Dalrymple, esquire.

HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

FIRST SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT* OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET 12 JANUARY, 1886, IN THE FORTY-NINTH
YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1886.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 26*th March*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Consolidated Fund (No. 2)* ; Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 3)* (48).

Second Reading—Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order * (38); Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 1)* (25); Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 2)* (40).

Second Reading — Committee negatived — Third Reading—Consolidated Fund (No. 1),* and *passed*.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR SCOTLAND.

The Clerk of the Crown in Chancery delivered his certificate that the Earl of Mar and the Earl of Morton had been elected Representative Peers for Scotland in the room of the Viscount Strathallan and the Lord Saltoun deceased.

IRELAND—POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.—QUESTION.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether it is his intention, or the intention of any other Member of the Government, to make a statement in this House on the 8th April as to the Irish policy of the Government, similar to the statement which we understand will be made in the House of Commons on that day?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Earl GRANVILLE): It is not my intention to do so on that day.

LORD ASHBOURNE: Does the noble Earl intend to do so on an early date?

[No reply.]

LORD ASHBOURNE: If not on that date, will the noble Earl do so on another date?

EARL GRANVILLE: I have no doubt that it will be my duty to do so on some day or other—at least, I hope so.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 1) BILL.

(*The Lord Rayleigh.*)

(NO. 25.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD RAYLEIGH, in moving that the Bill be read the second time, said, that it was commonly but erroneously supposed that electric lighting was a recent invention. The arc light was, in fact, discovered at the beginning of the century by Davy, and might be recognized by its powerful character, which by contrast seemed to be intensely blue, but was really less blue than the daylight. Subsequently, the present Mr. Justice Grove, then an ardent experimentalist, showed how a reading-lamp could be constructed by passing electricity through a spiral wire at a red heat. The difficulty in the practical development of the art lay almost solely in the production of the electricity, which at that time could only be produced by batteries. But by the introduction of the dynamo machine the art of electric lighting attained a greater and greater development; and at the present time the dynamo had so nearly attained perfection that 93 per cent of the whole mechanical power was converted into the electrical form. The next difficulty was in employing electricity on a small scale; but the discoveries, almost simultaneous, of Edison and Swan, went far towards overcoming these difficulties. A period of speculation ensued. Electricity was supposed to be rapidly superseding gas, and gas shares accordingly became much depreciated in value. Then various schemes came before Parliament for the supply of the electric light, and the Act of 1882 was passed, which was termed "An Act for facilitating and regulating" the use of electricity for lighting and other purposes. But it was proposed to effect this object by more oppressive regulations than were ever before applied to an industrial undertaking. The burden of complaint lay in the 27th clause, by which Local Authorities should have the option of compulsorily purchasing undertakings for electric lighting after 21 years. In the event of disagreement as to the price, the question was to be submitted to arbitration; and it was provided that the price to be paid for the undertaking, plant, &c., should be its value at the time of purchase—that was, when the machinery might be much worn or even obsolete—but without any addition in respect of compulsory purchase, or of goodwill, or of any profits. What was still more surprising was that when the Bill was first introduced into the House of Commons the period was seven years. It was, however, extended by the Select Committee of that House to which the Bill was referred to 14 years, and their Lordships further enlarged the time to 21 years. If the terms of purchase had been reasonable the mere shortness of time might not have constituted an obstacle to the working of the clause. But no capitalist would care to invest his money in electrical enterprizes on such terms as the Act imposed. Those terms, in effect, were that if the enterprize failed the loss should fall exclusively on the capitalist; but if it should be successful the Local Authorities should have power to step in and buy the concern on utterly inadequate terms. How could such a clause permit the proper development of any scheme of electric lighting? The question arose, With what motive was the Act made so stringent? It had been suggested that the object really was to put a stop to electric lighting; and it was, perhaps, true that the powerful interest of the Gas Companies arrayed against electric lighting enterprizes had influenced the result too much. But he was unwilling to believe that Mr. Chamberlain, who was then President of the Board of Trade, was actuated by anything else than a desire for the public interest. It was a difficult and wide question how far Local Authorities could usefully enter into industrial enterprizes of this kind. He would not enter into that question, though he would remark that the electric light did not stand in the same position as water supply, which was an absolute necessity, or even as the manufacture of gas, of which almost as much was known as could be known. At the time the Act was passed it was generally supposed that the electric light would be a great success, and the Board of Trade desired that the benefit of that success should be shared by the public, and that it should not go entirely to private Companies. It seemed to him that there was too much jealousy at the present day of a private Company making large profits. Most undertakings were more or less of a speculative character; and if some were great successes others were miserable failures, so that one ought to be balanced against the other. The promoters of the Act, in endeavouring to advance the public interest, really inflicted great injury on the public by preventing them from having any chance of getting the electric light for many years. Although he believed a great mistake was made at the time of the passing of the Act in 1882, he was willing to admit that the subject was one of considerable difficulty. The Bill was not seriously debated in either House of Parliament; but it had the advantage of consideration by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, under the Presidency of Mr. E. Stanhope. That Committee took the evidence of experts, and heard counsel who represented the various interests involved. He must go further and admit that some of the witnesses on behalf of electric lighting examined before that Committee seemed to think that 21 years might possibly suffice as a minimum period, not, however, in conjunction with such terms of purchase at the end of the period as those embodied in the Act. From another point of view he thought they need not altogether regret that something in the nature of a wet blanket was thrown by the Act over the feverish speculation at that time. But during the last two years he thought the Act had done a great public injury. Experience had been gained in many mills and large ships which had been lighted by electricity; and the last two years would have been a very favourable time in other respects. Labour had been cheap, and capital could easily have been obtained on reasonable terms. As soon as it became clear that matters were at a deadlock, endeavours were naturally made to obtain some relaxation of the very stringent provisions of the law. At the suggestion of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who was then at the Board of Trade, a Committee was appointed, of which a noble Lord opposite (Lord Thurlow) was Chairman, and among its Members were Sir Frederick Bramwell and others, who were well qualified to advise in matters of that kind. The present Bill was, in fact, the outcome of the deliberations of that Committee. When they considered in what direction it would be possible to obtain a relaxation of the present law, the most obvious one that suggested itself was a prolongation of the period of 21 years, more particularly if that prolongation could be accompanied by some less unfavourable terms of purchase. This was the view of the matter which had commended itself to his noble Friend (Viscount Bury), who had contributed the second Bill to the trio now before the House. If the question were merely one of raising a large amount of capital in order to start an enterprize of this kind once for all, it was likely enough that such a relaxation as he had spoken of would meet the circumstances of the case. But they could not shut their eyes to the fact that, in so experimental an enterprize as electric lighting must be for many years, it would be impossible for a Company to lay out a large sum in the first instance, in the full confidence that they would obtain a fair remuneration for their outlay. They would establish the system on a comparatively small scale at first, and then would gradually extend it. In that case it was obvious that a comparatively small capital would be required in the first instance; but from time to time they would have to go into the market in order to raise fresh capital. In what position would the Company be to effect that object? After a considerable fraction of their term had elapsed they would be in such a position that it would be impossible for them to attract fresh capital to the enterprize. Moreover, the interests of the public would be by no means well served during the latter part of such a term. During the later years the Company would hesitate greatly about embarking on any improvements or extending the area of their operations. After considering the objections which he had endeavoured to place before their Lordships, the Committee came to the conclusion that a solution of the question could not be found in that direction; and they proposed that the two competitors, lighting by gas and lighting by electricity, should be put on the same footing in respect not only of privileges, but also of obligations. The obligations imposed by the Bill were more severe than anything in the existing law. One of the clauses relating to the compulsory supply of electric light provided that the Company should be required to supply electric light at any point within 25 yards of their mains. The important question of the raising of additional capital was provided for by the adoption of the corresponding provision from the Gas Acts known as the Auction Clauses. The object of securing to the public part of the benefits of the undertaking was, to a great extent, obtained under the provisions of the Bill by the adoption of what was known as the sliding scale of the Gas Acts. If a Company were able to supply light at a lower rate, then in accordance with that they would be at liberty to increase the dividends paid to their shareholders. By this arrangement a Company would have every inducement to consider efficiency and economy; and, at the same time, if circumstances were favourable, both the public and the Company would be benefited. At the present stage of the question he did not wish to commit their Lordships further than to the opinion that the obstacles should now be removed which practically forbade the attempt to supply electricity publicly on a large scale under the Act of 1882. If the suggestion of the noble Viscount who had another Bill on the same subject were adopted, the exact form of that remedy might be well left to a Select Committee of that House, or of both Houses of Parliament. What he particularly wished to emphasize was that too much time had been lost already; and it would be a matter of great regret if further delay was allowed to intervene, so as to prevent a fair chance being given to this most interesting application of modern discovery and invention, which promised to do much to relieve the gloom and unhealthiness of life in our great cities. The noble Lord concluded by moving that the Bill be now read the second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Rayleigh.*)

LORD HOUGHTON said, that Her Majesty's Government had no objection to the second reading of this Bill, provided that if the Motion of the noble Viscount (Viscount Bury) to refer the two Bills to a Select Committee should not be carried the noble Lord would defer the Committee stage of the present Bill till the Government Bill on the same subject had passed through Committee.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

(*The Viscount Bury.*)

(NO. 40.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

VISCOUNT BURY, in moving that the Bill be read the second time, said, that although it went in the same direction, it did not go so far as that of his noble Friend (Lord Rayleigh). The Bill to which the House had just given a second reading was a Companies Bill, as it put the undertakings of the Electric Lighting Companies on equal terms with those of the Gas Companies. But he believed that the interests of the public would be best served if a term were given at the end of which the electric lighting undertakings should belong to, or should be capable of acquisition by, the Local Authorities. His noble Friend, on the other hand, gave the Electric Lighting Companies a perpetuity like the Gas Companies. The term fixed by the Bill which he was now moving was 42 years. He had no objection to the greater part of his noble Friend's Bill; but it would be in the interests of the public that both should be referred to a Select Committee. If the Government had prepared a Bill on this subject why had they not brought it on before, instead of wishing to delay these Bills? Legislation was urgently required on this subject, as the Act of 1882 had made electric lighting altogether an impossibility. He did not know of a single place which had been lighted under it. It had entirely frightened capitalists away, as no one would invest money in a concern which could be sold for the price of old iron at the end of 21 years. He proposed to give a term of 42 or 63 years, at the end of which period the Local Authority would have to pay the price of a going concern.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Viscount Bury.*)

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 1) BILL.—(No. 25.)

(*The Lord Rayleigh.*)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 40.)

(*The Viscount Bury.*)

Viscount BURY, in moving that these two Bills should be referred to a Select Committee, said, that the matter must be dealt with, to a great extent, on expert evidence. The principle to which he attached importance was that the term for the purchase of the undertakings should be extended from 21 years to a much longer period, and the object of the Committee would be to inquire from experts what was the shortest term that could be given for working which would permit of capital being raised for electric light undertakings.

Moved, "That the Bills be referred to a Select Committee."—(*The Viscount Bury.*)

Lord HOUGHTON, in reply, said, that Her Majesty's Government had no complaint to make against either of the noble Lords; on the contrary, they quite admitted that the present position of electric enterprize fully warranted them in bringing in these Bills. Although the Electric Lighting Act of 1882 contained some valuable provisions, nevertheless he did not doubt that the time had arrived for relaxing some of its most stringent clauses. The Board of Trade had, in relation to this matter, to consider three separate interests—those of the inventors, those of the Local Authorities, and those of the public. Her Majesty's Government believed that electric lighting had a very brilliant future before it, provided sufficient security was taken that new and perpetual monopolies were not created. He objected to the Bill of the noble Lord (Lord Rayleigh) on the ground that although it was politely called an Amendment Bill it was really intended to entirely destroy the Act of 1882, and to establish a new series of vested interests. The Government, having taken the best opinions, found it was not necessary to alter the law regarding the right of consumers to choose their own burners. The noble Lord's argument seemed to be that because a bad bargain had been made with the Gas Companies they were bound to go on making such bargains. He appealed with great confidence to their Lordships not to aid the noble Lord in establishing a new monopoly. As to the Bill of the noble Viscount (Viscount Bury), he (Lord Houghton) was bound to say that the Government thought the present Purchase Clause was a fair one, and did not work badly; but the Bill of the noble Viscount would create a more dangerous, because a more insidious, form of monopoly. What Her Majesty's Government were prepared to do in their Bill was to extend the maximum term during which a Provisional Order should remain in force from 21 years to 30 years, and, with the consent of the Local Authority, to 42 years from the date of the concession, the Companies to have three months' notice in order to enable them to arrive at some new arrangement. Her Majesty's Government, however, could not consent to their Bill being referred, with those now under discussion, to a Select Committee. He, therefore, appealed to the noble Viscount to withdraw his Motion for referring these Bills to a Select Committee; or, at all event, to postpone it until he had seen the Government measure, which would be laid before the House in a day or two. In his opinion, this subject could be better discussed in Committee of the Whole House than by a Select Committee.

Viscount CRANBROOK asked whether it was intended that the three Bills should be referred to a Select Committee?

Lord HOUGHTON replied in the negative.

Viscount BURY said, that an extended term of 30 years would not be sufficient. If the noble Lord did not intend that the Government Bill should be referred to a Select Committee, and refused to agree to a further extension of the term beyond 30 years, he should go to a division upon his present Motion. If the noble Lord, however, would agree to refer the Government Bill to the same Select Committee to which these Bills were to be sent he would gladly withdraw his Motion.

The Duke of RICHMOND and GORDON said, that when the House had seen the Government Bill it would then be for their Lordships to decide whether the three Bills should be sent to the same Select Committee.

Earl GRANVILLE was understood to assent to that proposition.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

ISLANDS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC—THE NEW HEBRIDES—ALLEGED OCCUPATION BY FRANCE.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

The Earl of HARROWBY, in rising to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he has received any communications from the Australian Colonies on the subject of the apprehended occupation by France of the New Hebrides; and whether he could state what course Her Majesty's Government propose to take respecting this important matter? said, he hoped that the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Earl Granville) would be able to allay some of the anxiety that was felt on that important question. The future of the New Hebrides was a matter of no small concern to our Australian Colonies and New Zealand, and the subject required to be treated with very great delicacy and care. What he wished to impress on the noble Earl was that many of their Lordships felt an intense desire that the question as to the New Hebrides should be looked at principally from an Australian point of view. These Island were not of the small importance to the Colonies of Australia and New Zealand anyone would think, viewing them from a map. Of course, as it was mixed up with the subject of the possible increase of French convicts in those seas, it assumed an aspect of very great and peculiar gravity. He therefore hoped that Her Majesty's Government would approach that matter with an earnest desire to look at it not only from a British point of view, but, if possible, primarily from the point of view of their Australian fellow-subjects.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Earl Granville) said, he would endeavour to answer the Question in the same spirit in which the noble Earl (the Earl of Harrowby) had asked it. He (Earl Granville) fully recognized the appreciation shown by the noble Earl of the delicacy of some of the matters connected with that question. Their Lordships were aware that an agreement had been come to with regard to the Hebrides, and the Government most fully adhered to that agreement. A pledge had been given on the part of Her Majesty's Government to the Australian Colonies that no agreement should be entered into or considered with reference to those Islands without consultation with the Colonies interested in the matter; and at this moment they were in communication with all the Colonies on a suggestion that had been thrown out by the French Government which they thought might possibly be agreeable to the Colonies. Under those circumstances, he did not consider that it would be convenient in the interests of the Public Service that he should make any further statement at present on the matter.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (NO. 3) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Electric Lighting Act, 1882—Was *presented* by The Lord Houghton; read 1ª. (No. 48.)

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 1) BILL.

Read 2ª (according to order): Committee *negatived:* Then Standing Order No. XXXV. *considered* (according to order), and *dispensed with:* Bill read 3ª, and *passed.*

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 26*th March,* 1886.

MINUTES.]—Private Bill (*by Order*) — *Withdrawn*—Metropolitan Street Improvements Act, 1877 (Amendment).*

QUESTIONS.

ARMY APPROPRIATION ACCOUNTS—CHELSEA IN-PENSIONERS.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE (Chelsea) asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office, Whether his attention has been drawn to the remarks of the Comptroller and Auditor General, at page 194 of the Army Appropriation Account recently distributed, as to the age of Chelsea In-Pensioners; and, whether he will consider if the Secretary of State cannot make use of his powers under the Yeomanry Act of 1884, to so interpret the Chelsea Warrant as to allow the authorities of the Hospital to continue the practice of admitting a few men who are able to work and perform duty for the help of their weaker comrades?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY (Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE) (Leeds, W.): Yes, Sir; my attention has been drawn to the objections of the Comptroller and Auditor General, and steps are being taken to remove technical difficulties, and to continue a practice which is necessary for the service of the Hospital.

MARRIAGE LAW—CIVIL MARRIAGE.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether he is aware that a marriage between George Mummery, widower, and Jane Johnston, widow, was duly solemnized, on the 11th May 1885, before W. T. Ward, Registrar of St. Olave, Southwark, and was duly registered; whether, after, and with the knowledge of such marriage, the Rev. W. J. Batchelor, Rector of St. John, Horsleydown, incited the said George Mummery and Jane Johnston to be re-married before him, by licence, in the parish church, on the 1st July 1885; whether such second marriage was also registered, in contravention of the 19th and 20th Vic. c. 119, s. 12; whether he is aware that the parties to the marriage were respectively beadle and pew-opener in the said parish; whether, under the incitement, and with the knowledge of the said Rev. W. J. Batchelor, the marriage before the Registrar was disregarded, and treated as if it had not happened, and the parties were still described in the declaration for the licence, and in the parish church register, as widower and widow, as though the marriage before the Registrar had not taken place; and, whether he will direct the Public Prosecutor to take any action in the matter?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL) (Hackney, S.), in reply, said, he had communicated with the rev. gentleman, who had written and also called upon him. It was true, the rector said, that after the marriage before the Registrar he advised Mummery to obtain a licence, with a view to his marriage being celebrated according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church; and the marriage was subsequently solemnized and registered, as stated in the Question. He was not then aware of the provisions of the Act of Parliament, or should not have so acted. He had no intention of contravening the law, but simply to superadd the sanction of the Church to the secular ceremony. Mummery was the beadle and his wife had been pew-opener, but was not now so employed. Mummery stated that his reason for going before the Registrar rather than to the church was his desire to avoid any public or general notice; and seeing that he was about to marry his fourth wife, and that his intended wife was about to marry her third husband, perhaps their modesty was not unnatural. He did not think that on the whole it was desirable to take any further notice of the matter.

FRANCE — CONDITION OF THE AGRICULTURAL & INDUSTRIAL CLASSES —REPORT OF THE COMMISSION.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether a further Report has been published by members of the Commission appointed by the French Chamber of Deputies to inquire into the situation of the agricultural and industrial classes in France; and, whether, if such further Report relates to the agricultural classes, he will lay upon the Table of the House extracts from such Report, in continuation of Return [C. 4667], relating to certain industrial classes, which was recently presented to the House?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): No Report of the French Commission has yet been received relating to agriculture. When it comes to hand it shall be dealt with in the same manner as the Industrial Report and submitted to Parliament.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—ARREST OF MR. MORTIMER DOYLE.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a man, named Mortimer Doyle, was arrested in Dalkey, county of Dublin, on the 23rd of November last, as he was leaving a Nationalist election meeting, for having, on the morning of the same day, in assertion of title, thrown down a wall the height of which the Board of Works had, against his previous protest, raised; whether Doyle was detained in the company of common criminals in the police cells till the following day, although solvent bail was offered on his behalf; whether on the trial of the case Doyle was discharged, the magistrate observing that he had done nothing but what he was justified in doing; whether the same magistrate, at the first hearing of the case, at once declared his opinion that it was a case for a civil action rather than for a criminal prosecution; whether he will state the name of the official responsible for the arrest; and, whether the Government will compensate Doyle for the wrong to which he has been subjected?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said that it was a fact that Mortimer Doyle was arrested in Dalkey on the 23rd of November last for having thrown down a portion of a wall between his premises and the police station. The police had been previously informed that the wall was regarded as the property of the Chief Commissioner, and they made the arrest on their own responsibility. Doyle was not placed in the cell, but allowed to remain at the fire in the reserve room. No offer was made to bail him. He was discharged by the magistrate, who considered that, so far as pulling down the wall was concerned, Doyle acted under a fair and reasonable supposition that he had a right to do what he did. He added, however, that if Doyle suffered anything in consequence he had only himself to blame, as he had used threats, and the case was not considered one in which compensation should be given.

MR. CLANCY: The right hon. Gentleman has not stated the name of the official responsible for the arrest.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: Unfortunately I do not know the name.

MR. CLANCY: Will you inquire.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I will.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CASE OF "M'MEEKAN v. THOMSON."

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Coffey, Taxing Officer, Four Courts, Dublin, was recently frequently applied to by the defendant and his solicitor, in the case of M'Meekan v. Thomson, for copies of an affidavit made by the plaintiff, which said Mr. Coffey had characterised as "wilful and deliberate perjury;" whether Mr. Coffey declined to give the copies applied for; whether it is now alleged that the documents cannot be found; and, whether it is the practice for Mr. Coffey to receive, in the discharge of the duties of his office, affidavits which have not been regularly filed; and, if so, whether he will bring the fact under the notice of the Attorney General for Ireland, with a view to a change of practice in Mr. Coffey's office, so as to make persons responsible for what they state on oath?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, the affidavit was made in the course of the taxation of a bill of costs, and as to the payments alleged to have been made to a witness. Master Coffey, in the discharge of his duty, considered it necessary to comment on the nature of the explanation. It was not the practice, as he was informed by the Attorney General, to file affidavits made for the purpose of vouching items in a bill of costs. The original affidavits were interchanged between the parties, and afterwards handed to the solicitor for the party who produced them. That course, he was informed, was found convenient and economical, and was followed in this case; consequently Mr. Coffey was unable to comply with the application. He was advised that the Attorney General could not interfere in the case.

IRISH LIGHTS—BOAT SERVICE TO THE FASTNET ROCK LIGHTHOUSE.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If it is a fact that Mr. Isaac Notter, of Crookhaven, has a monopoly of the boat attendance to the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse; if other inhabitants of Crookhaven have repeatedly offered to supply a better boat and crew on cheaper terms; and, whether, in future, the boat attendance will be thrown open to public competition?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Commissioners of Irish Lights inform me that Mr. Isaac Notter, of Crookhaven, has had the carrying out of the boat attendance on Fastnet for over 20 years. Applications have, from time to time, been received for this contract; but the Commissioners have strong objections to intrusting this particular contract to inexperienced persons, owing to the danger of the service; and as the Fastnet is exceptionally difficult of access for relieving the light keepers and supplying them with provisions, the Commissioners are not at present inclined to disturb Mr. Notter in his contract.

MEDICAL CHARITIES (IRELAND) ACT —REFUSAL OF MEDICAL RELIEF— CASE OF GEORGE MARTON, CASHEL UNION.

MAJOR SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Government is aware that, quite recently, George Marton, in charge on an evicted farm near Clerihan, in the Rose Green Dispensary District of the Cashel Union, in the county of Tipperary, was, while very ill, refused a ticket for medical relief by Mr. E. Heffernan, of Mocklerstown, on the grounds of his being an Emergency man, and was told he might get a doctor for himself, the consequence being that Marton, although seriously ill for ten days, was unable to procure medical relief, through there being no one within two miles who could issue medical relief tickets; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will take such steps as may prove necessary to prevent the issue of medical relief tickets being influenced by personal motives?

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): I would ask the Chief Secretary whether Emergency men are entitled to outdoor relief out of the poors' rate, having regard to the fact that their wages are generally 7*s*. 6*d*. a-day?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am informed that Marton was refused a dispensary ticket by Mr. Heffernan on the ground that he was in receipt of wages of £1 a-week, paid every Saturday. If the man was seriously ill and unable to pay a doctor, it seems strange that he should have omitted to communicate with the relieving officer, who is a responsible person, and who would not have refused relief without due cause.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)— BLOWING UP OF HOUSE OF ROBERT MARSHALL AT LONDONDERRY.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Wexford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the recent trial and conviction of George M'Garrigle on the charge of setting fire, by means of a dynamite explosion, to the house of one Robert Marshall in Derry, on St. Patrick's Day 1885; whether he is aware that it was alleged at the time of the occurrence that this outrage was perpetrated by the Nationalists of Derry, in consequence of Robert Marshall being obnoxious to them; whether Marshall actually brought a claim for malicious injury before the Derry Grand Jury; whether a Crimes Act inquiry into all the circumstances of the case was several times demanded, and was refused by the authorities; whether, as a consequence, Marshall evaded all suspicion, and M'Garrigle, being released on bail, fled the Country, and was only brought to justice several months after; whether he is aware that upon the recent trial it was conclusively proved that M'Garrigle was the tool of Marshall, who bribed him to commit the outrage; whether he is aware that M'Garrigle was recommended to mercy by the jury, on the ground that "he was a tool of Marshall's," the learned judge who presided saying "there was no doubt about that;" whether Marshall has successfully evaded justice; and, whether the Government can give any information as to the number of cases recently in which outrages to property in Ireland, attributed to the people, have subsequently been proved, as in this case and the case of Mrs. Lucas in Cork, to have been perpetrated by the owners of the property themselves?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that the first eight paragraphs in the Question were correct statements of the facts. It was always believed by the authorities that Marshall had employed M'Garrigle to blow up the house with gunpowder, not dynamite. An inquiry under the Crimes Act was suggested at the time; but it was ultimately determined that no benefit could accrue from it. The Inspector General informed him that he was not aware of any recent cases, except this and the case of Mrs. Lucas mentioned in the House the other night, in which outrages to property were proved to be perpetrated by the owners of the property themselves.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): Does not his Excellency know of the case of the Orange member of the Corporation of Derry, who was sentenced to five years' penal servitude for burning his own house?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: The hon. Gentleman misapprehended what I said. I said the Inspector General was not aware——

Mr. SEXTON: He ought to be aware.

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)—BEAM TRAWLING IN IN-SHORE WATERS.

Mr. PRESTON BRUCE (Fifeshire, W.) asked the Secretary for Scotland, Whether he has yet confirmed the bye-law recently passed by the Fishery Board for Scotland, with reference to beam-trawling in the Firth of Forth and certain other territorial waters; and, whether this bye-law will come into force upon the 5th of April next, as its terms show was intended by the Fishery Board?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Trevelyan) (Hawick, &c.): Before confirming the bye-law recently passed by the Fishery Board for Scotland for closing certain in-shore waters against beam trawling, I have arranged to receive deputations from the General Steam Fishing Company, and representatives of the various Bodies who have memorialized the Fishery Board on the subject, together with the members of the Fishery Board itself, in order to give the opportunity of a full hearing of the arguments of all parties concerned. The bye-law will not come into force on the 5th of April unless it shall have been confirmed by the Secretary for Scotland.

IRELAND—THE MAGISTRACY—MESSRS. TRUELL, BARTON, AND ACTON—CASE OF MR. STOREY.

Mr. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What decision the Lord Chancellor has come to in reference to the conduct of Messieurs Truell, Barton, and Acton as Justices of the Peace, in sentencing Mr. Storey to six months' imprisonment, without the option of fine, for a nominal assault; and, whether the Lord Lieutenant has acceded to the application made to him on behalf of Mr. Storey, and remitted the penalty of five ponnds imposed by the County Court Judge in reversing the decision of the Magistrates?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Lord Chancellor has received the explanation of the magistrates. They state that it was proved before them that the peace of the district was seriously endangered, and, therefore, that they thought it necessary to impose a severe sentence. The Lord Chancellor sees no reason to doubt that they arrived at the conclusion in good faith; but he concurs with the County Court Judge in thinking that the original sentence was, under the circumstances, one of undue severity, and he has so informed the magistrates, with an intimation that he hopes in future they will exercise a more careful discretion in fixing the amount of punishment. His Excellency has declined to remit the fine which was attached to the reversal of the decision of these magistrates.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—BOGUS OUTRAGE AT CASTLECAULFIELD, CO. TYRONE—CASE OF ROBERT CUDDY.

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Was it reported to the police, that, on the night of 21st December last, a man disguised and with his face blackened visited the houses of John Armstrong, Jonathan Colbert, Thomas Armstrong, Samuel Somerville, John Macwhinny, and William M'Kenna, near Castlecaulfield, county Tyrone; is it the fact that the man had a book with him, from which he pretended to read, and in which he seemed to make entries; that he asked who lived in each house, and for whom he had voted at the late election; said he was from Dublin and had other boys with him; that he told them to pay no rent, or, if they did, they would not have long to live; whether, when he came to the house of M'Kenna, he said, "All right, you are a Nationalist," and, pointing to a schoolhouse, which had been an Orange Lodge, said, "That must be removed;" was he hunted down and captured by two men named Bunnes and Armstrong, and did it transpire that he was an Orangeman named Robert Cuddy, junior; is it true that Cuddy and his father were brought by the police before a local justice, Colonel Burgess, and discharged without a prosecution; and, was the case reported to the resident magistrate, and have any steps been taken to punish the author of this outrage; and, if not, who is responsible?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply. said, a Report was being prepared with reference to the circumstances, and was under consideration. He would ask the hon. Member to repeat the Question, so as to give him an opportunity of fully inquiring into it.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)— OUTRAGE IN PORTADOWN.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it a fact that, on Saturday night last, a stone was flung into the shop of Miss Fearon, newsagent, Portadown, and two panes of plate glass broken; has Miss Fearon's house been repeatedly attacked and her life threatened unless she ceased to exhibit the cartoons of the Nationalist papers in her shop window; was a stone or bullet fired through the window on the night of the 22nd February last; was another stone flung into the shop on the evening of 18th February, and a Mr. M'Intyre, who was standing by the counter, struck; have the police failed to bring the authors of any of these repeated attacks to justice; and, whether adequate police protection will be afforded to Miss Fearon in the exercise of her lawful calling, against the intimidation practised against her?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that the police were aware that two stones and a marble were thrown into the shop of Miss Fearon, in whose shop Nationalist newspapers were sold, and that notices were posted cautioning her against exhibiting the cartoons. The police had not heard of the incident of the 18th February mentioned in the Question, and therefore they assumed it had not occurred. The police had instructions to keep watch on the house in their order to detect the guilty parties; but efforts had hitherto been without success.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: I would draw the attention of the Chief Secretary and the Government to the singular supineness of the authorities in dealing with Orange rowdies, and will ask a Question on that subject.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—THE SHERIFF OF GALWAY.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, With reference to statements in the press to the effect that a force of constabulary has been engaged in aiding the sheriff to carry out evictions on the estate of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, whether the only ground for the statement is that the sheriff of Galway, last month, executed a writ of habere upon a holding of which the Archbishop is trustee on behalf of a charitable institution; whether the holding formed an undivided moiety of a certain parcel of land, the tenant being the owner in fee of the other moiety; whether, before the execution of the writ, the Archbishop's solicitor and agent informed the sheriff that there was no occasion for the employment of the constabulary, that it would involve entirely unnecessary expense, and that the ejectment of the tenant was not required, the object of the writ being, as was known to the sheriff and all the parties concerned, to procure a legal partition of the moieties of the land; whether, notwithstanding, the sheriff brought a large force of constabulary to the spot; whether he and his bailiff insisted on putting out the tenant, against the expressed desire of the agent; how the cost of the force of constabulary will be defrayed; and, what course the Government will take in regard to the conduct of the sheriff?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that there was only one eviction in this case, and it was simply of a formal nature to enable possession to be assumed of an undivided moiety, the tenant being the owner in fee of the other undivided moiety. It was carried out without the slightest difficulty or inconvenience to the tenant. The Archbishop did intimate, through his solicitor, to the sheriff that no difficulty whatever was expected, and that the police might be dispensed with. The sheriff, however, from considerations of a general character, and without reference to the particular circumstances of the case, concluded that he would not be justified in going into the locality without protection, and he was accompanied by eight men. The cost only amounted to one guinea, which would be paid out of the Constabulary Vote.

MR. SEXTON: I shall move to take that guinea out of the Constabulary Vote.

AFRICA (EAST COAST)—FOREIGN ANNEXATION.

Mr. JAMES HUTTON (Manchester, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he can, without detriment to the Public Service, inform the House of the precise terms of the understanding with the Governments of France, Germany, and Zanzibar, to which reference was made by him on the 11th instant, to the effect that no annexation of territory will be made while the Zanzibar Delimitation Commission is sitting; and, when it is expected that the Commission will complete its work?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): No reference was made in my answer on the 11th instant to any understanding with the Governments of France or Zanzibar. The understanding with Germany is informal; but Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that it will be observed. It is at present impossible to form an estimate as to the date when the work of the Commission will be completed.

SOUTH AFRICA—THE SALE OF INTOXICATING DRINKS IN THE TRANSKEI.

Mr. VALENTINE (Cumberland, Cockermouth) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Proclamation made by the Government of Cape Colony, allowing the sale of intoxicating drinks in the Transkei is still in force, or if it has been withdrawn; and, if the latter, what was the date of the withdrawal?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Osborne Morgan) (Denbighshire, E.): By a Proclamation dated October 8, 1885, of the Government of the Cape Colony, and amended by a Proclamation dated December 31, 1885, the sale of spirituous liquors to any Native, unless he should produce a permit signed by a magistrate, a Justice of the Peace, or field cornet, was prohibited in the Transkeian territory. These Proclamations are still in force. There is no prohibition against the sale of other liquors to Natives, although the importation of wine, beer, and other intoxicating liquors into the territory, except under certain conditions, is strictly forbidden. Papers relating to the subject were laid by me yesterday on the Table, and will be circulated in a few days.

ARMY—THE MARTINI-ENFIELD RIFLE.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he will make arrangements for the issue to the public of a limited number of the new Martini-Enfield ·400 rifles, with ammunition, on payment of four pounds for each rifle and ten shillings for each hundred rounds of ammunition, in order to subject the new arm to independent criticism?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): The pattern of the new rifle which has been approved by the Military Authorities was elaborated, after numerous experiments, by a committee of officers thoroughly conversant with the requirements of the Service. As an additional precaution, a tentative issue of 1,000 rifles will be made to the troops in order to see if they may require alteration in any minor points. Under these circumstances, I do not consider that it will be necessary to resort to the plan suggested by the hon. Member.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—MURDER OF PATRICK FINLAY AT WOODFORD.

Captain M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the following facts relative to the estates of Sir Henry Burke and Mrs. Lewis, in the vicinity of Woodford, are correct:—That on the estate of Sir Henry Burke, comprising one hundred and thirty holdings, there has not been a single rise of rent in the memory of the oldest tenant; that not a single tenant entered the Land Court to obtain a reduction of rent; that, in November last, Sir Henry Burke voluntarily offered a reduction of fifteen per cent; that, on the estate of Mrs. Lewis, almost all the tenants have had judicial rents fixed; whether the tenants, at the usual time for paying their rents, marched in, in a body, headed by four priests, and demanded a reduction of fifty per cent; whether these reverend gentlemen were members of the National League, and if the murdered man, Finlay, was refused Christian burial by any of them; whether it was on account of this demand, and the threats and intimidation accompanying it, that legal proceedings were instituted; and, whether the Irish Executive still decline to afford assistance to Sir Henry Burke and Mrs. Lewis to enable them to assert their legitimate rights?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I have no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of the statements contained in this Question, except that, with regard to the burial of Finlay, I am informed that he was buried with the rites of his Church, and that one of the clergymen referred to in a preceding paragraph of the Question officiated. As to the last paragraph, I have only to observe that there is no pretence whatever for the assumption that either in these or in any other cases the Government have declined to afford assistance in the assertion of legitimate rights.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—MEMORIAL FOR REMISSION OF SENTENCES—CASE OF THE O'BRIENS'.

Captain M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a memorial has been presented to the Irish Executive for the remission of sentences of twelve months' imprisonment passed on two men named O'Brien, at the Winter Wicklow Assizes, for having waylaid and badly beaten a carman named James Dunne, who was boycotted for driving the police; whether, after the trial at Wicklow, a hay-rick, the property of James Dunne, was maliciously burnt; and, whether it is the intention of the Executive to accede to the prayer of the memorial?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, the memorial was under the consideration of the Government. It was a fact that a hayrick, the property of Dunne, had been burned, and Dunne had announced his intention to seek compensation; but he attributed the act to no one in particular.

LAW AND POLICE—ACTION OF THE POLICE AT LEEDS.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the following account of the conduct of the Police in Leeds on Friday 19th instant:—

> "Yesterday afternoon a scene of an unusual and not very creditable character took place in Briggate, the principal street of Leeds. The management of the Grand Theatre had issued placards 'to the unemployed,' offering work to two hundred men. The men were to apply at the stage door of the theatre at half-past twelve, and some hundreds congregated in Harrison Street. Some of the theatre officials, it is understood, became alarmed at the language used by some of the men who were rejected, and word was sent to the Police Station that a riot was in progress. A few minutes later, while the crowd was peaceable and orderly, half a dozen policemen, mounted on horses from the Fire Brigade Station, dashed along Briggate, and, turning into Harrison Street, rode down upon the closely-packed mass outside the theatre door. A scene of great confusion and terror ensued, the people flying in all directions to escape the horses' hoofs, while those who attained places of safety hooted at the Police. The latter, turning, rode out again into Briggate, which was now full of excited spectators, and these latter, to their dismay, were then charged by the horsemen, who dashed along the pavements, driving the unfortunate bystanders and pedestrians into shops, &c. and pursuing them up the side streets they sought refuge in. Returning to the main street, now crowded, they dashed repeatedly along the pavements and road, one man even kicking at the crowd as he dashed by them. An order was given for the men to confine themselves to the road, and to behave with more moderation, and after some time the excitement abated, and in an hour or so the crowd dispersed;"

and, whether he will cause inquiries to be made into the matter?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh S.) said, he had asked for a Report from the Leeds authorities into the conduct of the police of that borough on the 19th instant, and had been promised a Report of the facts of the case when the Watch Committee had ascertained the full particulars. When the Report reached him he would consider what was necessary to be done. He reminded the hon. Member that he had no authority over the borough police, and that none had authority but the elected Town Council.

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (CHANCERY DIVISION)—TAXING MASTERS.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether, having regard to the additional powers and responsibility conferred on and vested in the eight Chancery Taxing-Masters, by Order 65 of "The Rules of the Supreme Court, 1883," and the Rules of December 1885, and to the fact that the fees earned by them amount on an average to £32,215 per annum, showing an annual profit, after payment of their salaries and the salaries of their clerks, of between £9,000 and £10,000 per annum, the Government will take under their consideration the propriety of appointing an additional Taxing-Master, making the ninth, thus completing the number contemplated and provided for by section 5 of the 5th and 6th Vic. c. 103?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL) (Hackney, S.), in reply, said, he would take care that this point was submitted to the Lord Chancellor?

INDIA (FINANCE, &c.)—THE SILVER CURRENCY.

MR. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, with reference to the statement of the Indian Finance Minister, Sir A. Colvin, in his Budget Speech, that—

> "The earnest attention of the Secretary of State has been called to the subject of the silver difficulty by the Indian Government, who have pressed on him the necessity of seeking, in concert with the Great Powers and the United States, a solution of the question,"

What steps have been taken, and with what result, by the Secretary of State to give effect to this recommendation?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe): On January 26 last a letter on this subject was sent by order of the noble Lord the late Secretary of State in Council to the Treasury. This was followed by a further letter, inclosing, by the direction of the present Secretary of State in Council, a despatch from the Government of India. The questions involved are now under the consideration of the Treasury, and no reply has yet been received.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE FIRST GLOUCESTERSHIRE ENGINEERS' CORPS.

MR. AGG-GARDNER (Cheltenham) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, as a large number of Volunteers are desirous of joining the 1st Gloucestershire (Western Counties) Engineers' Corps, but are prevented by reason of the Regiment having attained its regulation strength, he will sanction the formation of two additional companies, or the enrolment of supernumeraries?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): The corps in question has already 10 companies, and the addition of a submarine company at Cardiff has been sanctioned. This is considered by the Military Authorities to be as large for administrative purposes as any Volunteer corps should be. The enrolment of supernumeraries is contrary to regulation.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—HOUSE OF COMMONS—THE LOBBY.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich) asked the honourable Member for North West Staffordshire, Whether he will, for the convenience of Members of this House, permit two or more men of the Corps of Commissionaires to attend in the Lobby?

THE LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. LEVESON GOWER) (Stafford, N.W.) said, he would take care that the suggestion of the hon. Member should be brought under the notice of the proper authorities.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MR. FRANK BROOK, BROOKBOROUGH, CO. FERMANAGH.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the following paragraph in the Report of a speech delivered by Mr. Frank Brook, at Brookborough, county Fermanagh, and reported in *The Fermanagh Times* of the 18th instant—

> "But, brother Orangemen, if England spurns us from her then, and, if by the vote of the men who are tied hand and foot to Gladstone's chariot wheels, and who would follow him to perdition sooner than vote against him—if, I say, by these votes Home Rule is granted to the Parnellite rebels, then, I say, England scorns us; and we must let her know, with no uncertain sound, that we, the loyal minority, will never, no, never, allow the rebels to place their yoke around our necks, at least not without a struggle; and, before accepting their law as the law of the land, we will rise as one man and fight for our liberties, our homes, and our glorious religion;"

and, whether this speech will be brought by the Government under the notice of the Lord Chancellor, in view of the fact that Mr. Brook holds the Commission of the Peace, and is a Deputy Lieutenant for Fermanagh? The hon. Member added that his Question had been altered. In the original form the word "hell" occurred, and not "perdition."

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): This Question appears without Notice, and I have not been able to ascertain whether this quotation is correctly given. If I find, however, that there is reason to believe that Mr. Brook used the language imputed to him, I may consider it my duty to bring the matter under the notice of the Lord Chancellor.

POST OFFICE — REGISTERED TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESSES — MESSRS. J & W. JUDGE, KENNINGTON.

Mr. GENT-DAVIS (Lambeth, Kennington) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Telegraph Department have refused to continue the registered telegraphic address "Cottonbag," adopted by Messrs. J. and W. Judge, of Kennington, some years ago, and selected by the Post Office at the time as being a suitable one for them, and if the refusal is solely on the ground that it is a double word, and "might" cause difficulties in transmission; whether the Department has given this firm two months summary notice to discontinue the address, putting them to considerable inconvenience and expense, advising correspondents, renewing stationery, &c.; and, if there is any instance where this anticipated difficulty has occurred with the address in question, and is it a fact that a large number of commercial houses in London are at the present time using double words?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.), in reply, said, the address referred to was registered before addresses of telegrams were charged for, and now there were frequent disputes as to whether it was one word or two. Consequently, the Postmaster General had given notice that the word must be changed, but was willing to allow a sufficient interval to elapse to prevent inconvenience.

DYNAMITE OUTRAGES, 1884 (METROPOLIS)—THE REWARD.

Viscount NEWARK (Notts, Newark) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the reward of two thousand pounds, offered in 1885 for information which would lead to the conviction of Cunningham and Burton, the dynamitards, has yet been awarded; whether Mr. and Mrs. Herrod, who were fellow passengers with Cunningham on board the *Shannon*, were subpœnaed by the Solicitor to the Treasury to attend the Sessions at the Old Bailey in May last, and there gave important evidence identifying the prisoners; and, whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to grant Mr. and Mrs. Herrod any of the promised reward?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): Yes, Sir; so much of the reward as it has been deemed advisable to distribute has been already apportioned by the Police Authorities in accordance with the instructions of the Treasury Solicitor. The noble Lord may not be aware that this reward referred only to the four explosions which took place at London railway stations in February, 1884, and that Cunningham and Burton were proved to have been connected with only one of these. It is true that Mr. and Mrs. Herrod gave useful evidence; but they have not been rewarded, as they did not come within the terms of the reward bill. They were ordinary witnesses, brought forward as the result of police inquiry, and did not give information such as that for which the reward was offered.

REGULATION OF THEATRES—LEGISLATION.

Captain PRICE (Devonport) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, with the view of enabling the local authorities to more effectually control places of public entertainment, he would bring in a Bill to extend the provisions of the Act 25 Geo. 2, c. 36, s. 2, at present only applicable to the Metropolis, to the whole of the United Kingdom?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): Except in a letter from the hon. and gallant Member himself, I have had no information laid before me showing that the Local Authorities have not, under the present law, sufficient power to control places of public entertainment. Under these circumstances, I cannot pledge myself to recommend legislation in the direction proposed—that is to say, by extending the operation of Section 2 of the Act quoted, by which any house, garden, or other place kept for public entertainment without a licence shall be deemed a disorderly house or place. This now only applies to the cities of London and Westminster, and to places within 20 miles of them.

INLAND REVENUE—SURVEYORS OF TAXES.

SIR HENRY MEYSEY THOMPSON (Lincolnshire, Brigg) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Surveyors of Taxes are paid poundage on the amount of Income Tax collected in their districts?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): No; surveyors of taxes are salaried officers, and are not paid poundage on the amount of Income Tax collected.

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT—CUSTOMS CLERKS.

COLONEL MAKINS (Essex, S.E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Is it true that, in 1877, when the Inland Revenue Department, Somerset House, was reorganised under the Playfair Scheme, an actuary was employed by the authorities to calculate the exact amount of compensation due to each clerk whose prospects had been interfered with by the re-organization; and, whether such compensation was forthcoming, in the shape of an immediate increase of salary; if so, is the Treasury prepared to similarly deal with the case of the ex-redundant Customs' clerks who were distinctly promised speedy promotion. to induce them to join the Outdoor Branch, but whose prospects have since been almost destroyed by the abolition of a large number of surveyorships?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): No actuary was employed by the Inland Revenue Department to calculate the exact amount of compensation due to clerks whose prospects had been interfered with by the re-organization under what is called the Playfair Scheme. Calculations were made by the Inland Revenue Department as to the loss of prospects by certain existing clerks owing to the abolition of the class system and the consequent loss of "jumps," or increase of salary on promotion from class to class, and in making their calculations the Board of Inland Revenue conferred with Mr. Vaughan, the actuarial clerk of the Board of Trade. The Treasury compensated the clerks for the loss of "jumps" by an immediate addition to their salaries, restricting, however, their maximum pay to £380, the maximum of the old seniority class. No promise of speedy promotion was ever made to induce the redundant Customs clerks to join the outdoor branch, nor was there any understanding that the number of surveyorships would not be reduced if found too large for the requirements of the Service. In fact, many of the redundant clerks only joined the outdoor service when the alternative was placed before them of doing so or being placed on the pension list.

THE DUCHY OF CORNWALL—COMPENSATIONS.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Treasury minute of 15th February 1839 (directing that, from the 5th April 1841, the sum of £630 14*s.* 2*d.* should be deducted from the annual amount of £16,216 15*s.* 1½*d.* paid to the Duchy of Cornwall), was not laid before both Houses of Parliament on the 19th April 1839, pursuant to 1 and 2 Vic. c. 120, ss. 6 and 7; whether by s. 6 of the said statute the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury were directed to grant such compensation as seemed to them just and proper, and by s. 7 to lay before Parliament a return showing the amount of the compensation so granted by them; whether the Treasury minute of 15th February 1839 was ever formally revised and at what date; whether such revision was ever communicated to Parliament on that occasion; and, whether he will lay upon the Table a Copy of the objections taken on behalf of the Duchy of Cornwall to such annual deduction of £630 14*s.* 2*d.* and a copy of the Treasury minute on such deductions?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Treasury Minute of the 15th of February, 1839, was laid before both Houses of Parliament on the 19th of April, 1839, under the Act 1 & 2 *Vict.* c. 120, s. 7. The compensation referred to in Section 6 of the Act is compensation to officers whose emoluments were affected by the operation of the Act, but does not affect the payment to be made to the Duchy of Cornwall. The Minute was never formally revised; but, as I stated last night, the Treasury acquiesced in the view taken by the Council of the Duchy of Cornwall, and have acted accordingly during the last 45 years.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—THE LOSS OF THE "OREGON" CUNARD MAIL STEAMER.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If it is the fact that the *Oregon*, in common with all steamers conveying passengers between this Country and the United States, had to obtain not only passenger certificates from the Board of Trade, but had also to undergo a periodical examination in the United States by inspectors appointed by the Government of that Country, and that no such vessel can obtain a clearance unless provided with a certificate from their inspectors that she complies with the American law as to efficiency of hull and engines, and as regards the sufficiency of her boat accommodation, life saving, and fire appliances, and that the same requirements in these respects are imposed on British ships by the United States Law as apply to vessels under their own flag; and, whether he can state if it would be possible to require such a vessel as the *Oregon* to carry a larger number of boats than she had, with a due regard to the safe navigation of the vessel, to the rapid lowering of the boats when required, and to their safe carriage in bad weather?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): As I came down to the House to-day I received a telegram from Messrs. Ismay, Imrie, and Co., of Liverpool, who, I believe, are the owners of the *Oregon*. [Mr. FORWOOD: No!] Well, they are large owners of steamers running between this country and America. The telegram says—

> "Our attention having been directed to Mr. Forwood's Question in *The Times* of to-day, we beg to state that the facts he assumes are quite correct, and in strict accordance with our actual experience."

I am informed that all passenger steamers visiting the United States are subject to the law of that country as regards inspection and certificates. I may, however, state that as regards ships' boats, the United States have adopted a rule that requires no increase to the boat accommodation carried by British passenger ships. I am advised that it is not possible for a steamer like the *Oregon* to carry a larger number of boats than she had with due regard to the safe navigation of the vessel, the rapid and efficient lowering of the boats in sudden emergency, and their safe carriage in bad weather. By our rule for measuring, the *Oregon's* boats could only accommodate 365 persons; but, according to the American statutory measurement, the same boats could accommodate 1,216 persons, or 338 more than the actual number of passengers who were on board the *Oregon*. But, as I stated yesterday, I have appointed a Departmental Committee of practical men to inquire into the whole question, and as to how far boats may be supplemented by rafts and other contrivances, and to report to the Board of Trade and to the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea.

SCOTLAND—TRAMWAYS FOR CROFTER DISTRICTS.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Government will consent to the facilities for the formation and working of Tramways given by the Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1883, being extended to those parts of Scotland included in the Crofters Bill of the Government now before Parliament?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) asked the hon. Gentleman to postpone the Question, so as to give time for its consideration.

LAW AND JUSTICE—THE LAW OF EVIDENCE IN CONSPIRACY AND DIVORCE.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether, in a recent case in the Divorce Court, it was decided that evidence upon which a respondent was found guilty of adultery was not receivable as against the co-respondent; whether, in cases of conspiracy, it has been decided that evidence receivable against one prisoner is receivable also against another prisoner who is jointly charged with that offence; whether it has also been decided that, where two persons are jointly charged with conspiracy, both must be found guilty or both acquitted; and, whether he is prepared to take steps with a view to making the Law of Evidence in cases of adultery similar to the Law of Evidence in cases of conspiracy?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL) (Hackney, S.): The rule as to the non-admissibility of evidence mentioned in the first part of the Question is one which has been recognized in every Court of Law in the Kingdom, and is well established. A statement made, as in the case put, is evidence against the person making it, but not against any other person, if that person was not present when it was made. This rule does not affect the law relating to conspiracy, which is as stated in the Question. I see no reason, as at present advised, for such an alteration in the rules of evidence as the hon. Member proposes.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (Chelsea): With your permission, Sir, I wish to throw myself upon the indulgence of the House while I say a few words with reference to the Question which has just been asked. It is apparently an abstract Question; but it cannot but be taken as referring to the case in which I was recently concerned. I wish to ask the leave of the House to appeal to the hon. Member who put the Question that if he thinks right that the matter should be mentioned here, he should raise it in a form which would enable me, in some way, to meet it in the House.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND—POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT—THE ULSTER LIBERAL CONVENTION.

MR. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he has received a copy of a resolution passed at the "Ulster Liberal Convention" on Friday last; and, if not, whether he is aware that the resolution stated that the Liberal party in Ireland would offer a most determined opposition to the establishment of a separate Irish Parliament, as it would be certain to produce a disastrous collision between sections of the people holding conflicting views on social, economic, and religious subjects, and would produce a feeling of insecurity which would jeopardise all industrial and commercial pursuits, and that the maintenance of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland was the best safeguard for the peace, prosperity, and liberty of all classes in Ireland; and, whether he would endeavour to produce a copy and lay it upon the Table of this House, the declaration of the opinions from those who were the adherents of the Liberal party in Ireland?

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): In reference to this Question, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware that the resolution referred to was adopted at a preliminary meeting only by a majority of one; if at the Convention itself an amendment declaring confidence in the right hon. Gentleman's Irish policy was made the subject of a division; that the chairman refused to ascertain in a conclusive way the result of the division; and that the mover of the amendment and those who supported him maintained that the amendment was in reality supported by a large majority of the Convention?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I have been made cognizant of the resolution to which the Question refers, and I have also heard some statements with regard to the proceedings at the meeting at which the resolution appears to have been adopted. I do not think it my duty to enter into an examination of those proceedings, and all that I have to say is already covered by what I stated on a former occasion—namely, that I shall endeavour to see whether, from the papers expressive of the views of important bodies in Ireland, a selection may be made which would be instructive.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND—POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I am anxious to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury a Question with reference to the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday. The Chancellor of the Exchequer informed the House that it was the intention of the right hon. Gentleman on the 8th of April to make a statement with respect to his Irish policy. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he can tell the House in what form that statement will be made; whether in such a form as to admit of the subject being fully discussed, and, if necessary, of an issue being taken upon it? I shall be happy to ask the Question on Monday if the right hon. Gentleman requires Notice.

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Most certainly, Sir, I have no difficulty in answering, in particular, the last part of the Question. The statement will be made in such a form as will admit of debate, or of any course which hon. Members may think fit to take. It will place the subject completely under the command of the House. The purport of it will be to procure the opportunity for the introduction of a Bill for the future government of Ireland. I will consider the particular form of the Motion, and lay its terms upon the Table either on Monday or Tuesday.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON MINES —THE REPORT.

In answer to Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton),

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) said, that the Report of the Commission on Mines had been laid on the Table, and there would be no delay in circulating it. He fully expected to be able to introduce a Bill founded on that Report and upon certain other things immediately after Easter.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE ANTRIM ARTILLERY MILITIA.

MR. ALEXANDER BLAINE (Armagh, S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is a fact that the Antrim Artillery is to be trained at Plymouth this summer; and, whether the necessary guns and appliances to enable the men to obtain sufficient knowledge of their drill are still at Carrickfergus Castle, and whether there is an excellent sea range for practice; if so, would he state what is the object in sending the regiment to England, at considerable expense?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): It is the usual practice to train two brigades of Artillery Militia yearly at the large fortresses in the South of England. This year the choice falls upon the Antrim Artillery. It is only at large fortresses of this class that there are sufficient modern appliances as regards guns, mountings, &c., for the effective training of Militia Artillery in the use of recent armaments.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

PARLIAMENT — PUBLIC BUSINESS — THE ESTIMATES.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Edinburgh, Central), in rising to move,—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Estimates, in conjunction with the Official Heads of Departments, before they are submitted to the House,"

said, that the Prime Minister, in one of his addresses to his constituents in Mid Lothian, gave expression to these words:—

> "If you return a Parliament of the right kind, finance is one of the first subjects which must receive careful and close attention."

Now, he (Mr. J. Wilson) thought they had here a Parliament of the right kind—one specially able to deal with the question of finance, for during the Election Campaign most hon. Members, in addressing their constituents, dealt very minutely with this question of finance; and nearly all of them promised, if elected, to give it their special and careful consideration. It was only 14 or 15 years ago since the Expenditure of the country was something under £70,000,000. A few years later it rose to £80,000,000; and he well remembered what a sensation the mention of that sum created throughout the country. There were Financial Reform Associations formed in nearly every town; and these Associations and the newspapers discussed the question of the growing gravity of our financial Expenditure. Now they had left £80,000,000 behind, and had reached £90,000,000. He was quite prepared to admit that it was extremely difficult to deal with this subject. It was a large, far-reaching, and intricate question; but it must be faced. There was a growing impression throughout the country that, by one means or other, some limit—and that speedily—must be put on the increasing financial Expenditure of the nation. This was not a Party question. He was aware that on the hustings it was sometimes made a Party question; but he did not think either Party was identified exclusively with economy in the financial Departments. He was bound to say that, in looking into the history of the administration of the country for some years past, he was satisfied that the Gentlemen who were now represented by hon. Members opposite had on many occasions evinced as much desire for financial reform and administrative economy as Gentlemen who were represented by hon. Members on the Liberal side of the House. He was also bound to to say that perhaps both Parties at times had made financial blunders; but neither of them was entitled to the exclusive privilege or prerogative of being more peculiarly economical in their administration than the other. He had said that this question must be faced; and to-night he desired to raise a discussion on the best method of dealing with their growing Expenditure. Hon. Members of the House would be aware, from Returns recently placed in their hands from the Accountant General, how close and minute was the surveillance of the outgoings of the Expenditure of the country. They had also the Public Accounts Committee—the Standing Committee of the House dealing with the details of the Expenditure; and on looking back into the Report of that Committee for last year he was impressed with the singular minuteness with which the accounts of the country were examined. In the Comptroller General's Report lately issued there was again the same minuteness. In the list of outstanding debts given he noticed an item of 3*s*. as being due to the country by the Belgian Government. It was not in mere small details of the Estimates that a reduction of the Expenditure of the country could be effected. It was rather in the initiation or inception of Expenditure. Hon. Members had recently had a volume of Estimates put into their hands, comprising Votes varying from £1,000 to over £3,000,000; and he put it to hon. Members, were they satisfied when they came to vote the money that they were able to discharge this great public duty in the satisfactory manner in which they thought it ought to be done? Personally, he did not feel competent to analyze the large items of Expenditure which came before them in the off-hand way that was at present expected from a Member of Parliament; and as this must be the feeling of many, he thought some change in the mode of handling the Estimates was absolutely necessary. There were various suggestions as to how this should be done. He had noticed in the newspapers that certain suggestions had been made by the Government to the Procedure Committee, with the view of a portion of the Estimates being remitted to a Special Finance Committee to be afterwards appointed. Therefore, the principle of remitting the Estimates in whole or in part to a Committee for examination had been practically acknowledged.

Mr. RAIKES (Cambridge University): I rise to Order. I wish to ask whether the hon. Member is in Order in referring to what he supposes to have taken place in a Committee upstairs?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not in Order in referring to what has taken place in a Committee until the Committee has reported.

Mr. JOHN WILSON said, he might put the matter in another way. Instead of adopting his method of dealing with the question, it might be suggested that the Estimates ought to be brought, in the first place, before the House, and then sent to a Committee; but he thought the mode he proposed was preferable to that. The Committee he proposed for the consideration of the Estimates could call the officials and heads of Departments before it, and examine them to see whether the Estimates were properly and economically framed. Hon. Members who by their training could bring the special knowledge of details to bear would be able to subject the officials to a much more thorough examination than the mere head of a Department could possibly do. On the Navy Estimates, the other evening, for instance, the hon. Member for Leith (Mr. Jacks) pointed out several matters of detail which only a practical shipbuilder could have done. In the same way, if his suggestion were adopted, other hon. Members could bring minute knowledge of details to bear upon the investigation of the Estimates before they were submitted to the House. During the discussion on the Naval Estimates, the House was told it was not so much a question of expense as efficiency that was desired; and yet three eminent naval authorities variously estimated the additional sum necessary to put the Navy into a satisfactory condition at £2,000,000, £5,500,000, and £11,000,000. How could hon. Members decide the question of efficiency when naval authorities differed so widely? During the past five years the country had spent £60,000,000 on the Navy; and yet we were told we had not a line-of-battle ship which could face a foe, and we had not a single gunboat which could be relied upon. Had that £60,000,000 been spent under the supervision of such a Committee as he had suggested he was satisfied such complaints would not have been made. Another reason in favour of his Motion was that the House would have the assurance that the Estimates would come before it under the examination of a large number of hon. Members. Members did not attend the discussion on the Estimates, not from want of interest, but through incompetency to deal with the large sums involved in the wholesale way in which the Estimates now came before the House. It was that feeling of inability which deterred so many hon. Members from taking part in the discussions on the Estimates. The Government, of course, were responsible for the Estimates; but he did not think that if his plan were adopted there would be any infringement of Government responsibility. They could still draft the Estimates. They would have the suggestions of this Committee, which they could adopt or not as they pleased; and by-and-bye they would come before the House with the Report of the Finance Committee, and the House would then deal with the Estimates in the usual way, so that neither would the responsibility of the Government be lessened, nor the independence of the House forestalled. As to the composition of the proposed Committee, he would make it large and representative. It would, of course, require to be large, because it would be necessary, no doubt, to appoint sub-Committees. The majority would require to be in sympathy with the Government of the day; but at the same time there would be a large proportion of hon. Gentlemen from the Opposition. He had brought his Motion forward with the simple desire to draw the attention of the House to the matter of our Expenditure. He thought the time was most opportune. They had the Estimates before the House, and this question was also before the Committee on Procedure; and he thought a discussion on the best method of dealing with the Estimates would be instructive, not only to the House, but to the country at large.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid), in rising to second the Motion, said, every economist in the country who had watched the alarming increase of the Expenditure during the last 10 years felt that the time had come when a stand must be made to put a check upon the extravagance of the Public Services. The method proposed by this Motion of his hon. Friend (Mr. John Wilson), he believed, commended itself to those hon. Members having a practical knowledge of commercial undertakings on a large scale, and, indeed, of daily business life. It had long appeared to him, and to many gentlemen outside the House of Commons, that it was almost a hopeless task for any individual Member to succeed in cutting down an Estimate after it had been adopted by the Government of the day; and he feared that Ministers, who were responsible to the Government for the Estimates, were very much guided, if not controlled, by the official heads of the various Departments, whose sole object would appear to be to swell the Estimates year by year. Governments came and Governments passed away; but the official heads went on for ever, and proved to be too strong for the transitory Ministers. This year's Estimates were, in the opinion of many hon. Members, disgracefully too high, more particularly those for the Army. £18,250,000 sterling for the Army in a period of peace, when the country was suffering acutely from trade depression, was calculated to arouse a just and bitter feeling of hostility against the governing classes. By comparing the Estimates of the present year with those of 10 years ago they found a very striking contrast indeed. In 1875 the Civil Service, the Army, and the Navy Estimates were £40,000,000 sterling. The amount asked for in the Estimates lately issued to the House were, in the aggregate, the enormous sum of £50,000,000 sterling. Now, what was there to justify this great increase over the Estimates of

1875? He (Mr. Mason) knew they would be told that the Education Vote was so much more; and no one, he believed, grudged that. Then it was said our weapons of war are so much superior now, and that scientific discoveries travel so rapidly we are constantly requiring to renew them. There were also many other stock arguments made to do duty which he need not allude to. But all these did not explain the real cause. Sheer waste, gross mismanagement, and extravagance would be much nearer the actual truth. Of course, many of the new hon. Members, of which he was one, composing a majority of the House, had not yet been initiated into all the mysteries of knowing "how not to do it;" but they were at a loss to understand why a Lieutenant in the Army must retire at 40 years of age, and a Captain at the same age, a Major at 48, and a Lieutenant-Colonel at 55, all on half-pay. Others must take their places on full pay. The country had by this stupid system to pay one and a-half times for its officers in the Army, and these gentlemen who were forced to retire were burdened with a miserable life of idleness and half-starved into the bargain, and the country was burdened by finding the money to keep them in a state of misery. But what struck him and others as business men was this—why there should be an enormous increase when, in the ordinary course and natural order of things, there should have been a large decrease? Everyone was fully aware of the great fall in the value of all commodities except gold which has taken place during the last decade. Prices of all the supplies which Her Majesty's Government required must have fallen not less than from 30 to 50 per cent. As an illustration, ships could now be built on the Clyde 30 to 40 per cent less than they could have been built for 10 years ago. Whether such was the case in Her Majesty's Dockyards he could not say. But if not, why not? Probably some Member of the Government would be able to explain. These Estimates are most unsatisfactory, and very disappointing to many hon. Members who were hopefully looking for reduced Estimates. But they were told the Government—that is the present Government—were not to blame for these bloated Estimates; they were the work of their Predecessors in Office. The country would learn, then, the penalty it had had to pay for a few months of Tory rule. What might it not have been if years had elapsed instead of months? But if they must submit to pay for their folly for this year, he very much misapprehended the temper of this new Parliament and the feeling of the country if it did not demand that at least £10,000,000 should be struck off the Estimates next year, which he believed could be done without endangering the defence of the country or interfering with the proper efficiency of the Services. Many hon. Members had come there pledged to economy, and they meant to act up to their pledges, because they believed it to be a just and a wise policy, and that this Finance Committee would help the Government of the day to carry it into effect. The new Members were amazed with the minute details given in the Estimates of several of the items, especially when they compared these with the manner of passing the Supplementary Estimates in connection with Sir Drummond Wolff's Mission to Egypt. There were £12,500 for expenses, and a like sum for telegrams, which, added together, gave £25,000. He (Mr. Mason) believed it was considered on his side of the House that the Mission was not worth 25 pence. But no explanation was given of the large lump sum for telegrams; and what amazed him and others was that in the Civil Service Estimates he found an item of £10 for a rat-catcher at Windsor Castle. Surely if they got details in the one case there ought to be more in the other. They listened to a very interesting debate the other night on the Army Estimates; and shortly after midnight the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) announced to a thin House—in fact a handful of hon. Members—that he wanted £18,250,000 sterling—a stupendous sum—£4,000,000 or £5,000,000 being voted there and then. Now, it was an easy matter to pass trippingly over the tongue these vast sums, or even to vote them. But it was not such an easy matter to get the money from the industrial classes in these trying times. Trade was bad, manufacturers' profits had reached the vanishing point, depressed agriculture, the labourers and artizans of the United Kingdom—those who really produced the wealth of the country—had a difficulty in securing employment; the Revenue no longer went forward with leaps and bounds; but rather it showed unmistakable signs of going back. Was this, therefore, a time to go on increasing our Expenditure? A few weeks hence the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to provide the Ways and Means. Either he must continue to suspend the Sinking Fund for the redemption of the Debt or impose fresh taxation. If the latter course were adopted, where was the money to come from? Was it to be an increase of the Income Tax, or what? That, then, was the practical outcome of these swollen Estimates, by no means a pleasant one for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but far more unpleasant to the poor unfortunate taxpayers. The foreign policy of this country had been greatly changed for the better during the last 40 years; imperceptibly, gradually, but yet surely, caused by the commercial policy inaugurated by the late lamented Mr. Cobden and the pure and noble-minded Sir Robert Peel, and carried forward by the right hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright), and last, though not least, the present Prime Minister. These great statesmen had set in motion principles which were silently revolutionizing the world. They had altered and diverted the old aggressive policy of this country, which was promoted by the art of war into one not less aggressive, but much more beneficial, by the arts of peace. Why, then again, he asked, in the face of such a condition of things, should we be called upon to vote Estimates which had no parallel since the Crimean War? Instead of preparing constantly for war, wasting our national resources, our first duty should be to prepare for work. Unquestionably our industrial power was now the chief pillar of our strength. Let that by any means be partially struck with paralysis, and the foremost place we now occupy amongst the nations would be gone. Foreign competition of the fiercest kind was already running us hard in the neutral markets of the world; and not only so—the home market was being evaded by the foreigner. Every manufacturer felt it keenly. But he was not so foolish as to believe that Fair Trade nostrums would give either one or any fellow-manufacturers relief. He looked for the remedy in quite another direction, and that direction was economy. It followed that whatever helped to lighten the springs of industry should earnestly engage our attention; and, therefore, the future taxation of the country must not only be reduced, but made to fall more heavily on realized wealth. This proposed Finance Committee might consider the sources of the National Income, and help by suggestions to guide the Government of the day as to the sources of income, and the best method of raising the Revenue. It would not, as some people supposed, relieve the Government of any responsibility; neither would it hamper the action of the House. Doubtless, if the Government went against the finding of the Committee the House would know the reason why; but individual Members would then be ably assisted, cutting down the Estimates if the Committee so decided, and the Government would in that case have to fight the Committee in the House. On the other hand, if the Government and the Committee were agreed a vast deal of time wasted now in fruitless discussion would be saved. There were three things essentially necessary to enable this country to maintain its position as a first-class agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing nation in Europe; and these were—economical government, just taxation, and perfect freedom of trade. The last we had, in a large measure, already obtained; the second only to a very partial extent indeed. The first, he feared, was in the dim and distant future. But if the House established this Committee it might help them to realize it, although only to a limited extent, during the present generation.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Estimates, in conjunction with the Official Heads of Departments, before they are submitted to the House,"—(*Mr. John Wilson (Edinburgh,)*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby):

Sir, I can assure my hon. Friends the Mover and Seconder of this Resolution that they will always find, at least in the individual who happens to fill the Office which I have the honour to hold, a strong sympathy with the objects which they have at heart. There was never a time, I think, when it was more essential that this country should consider, and consider most carefully, the extent of its Expenditure. It has grown to a point which it has hardly ever reached before. I am speaking now of the normal Expenditure, not of the extraordinary Expenditure upon particular occasions. But I am not going to enter upon that great question now at any length—it will be my duty to bring that before the House at a later period; still less am I going to follow my hon. Friend who seconded this Motion—the discussion on taxation and the incidence of taxation. That, again, will belong to another occasion. But I agree myself very much in the opinion of the Mover and the Seconder that this House does not, and under existing circumstances cannot, give that examination to the Estimates proposed by the Government in anything like the measure which the House ought to give. So far I entirely agree with the Mover of this Motion. It would be out of Order, as the right hon. Member for Cambridge University (Mr. Raikes) has pointed out, that I should refer to any particulars of what is going on in the Committee of Procedure upstairs; but I think it would not be out of Order for me to say that the question of how the Estimates should be dealt with is one of the subjects which is under the consideration of that Committee, and I hope my hon. Friend will be content, at least, to wait until that Committee—which is a very competent Committee, with great experience both in financial affairs and also in the Business of this House—will have an opportunity of fully discussing and sifting this question, and reporting to the House on it. If I were to make any criticism on this Motion—which I hope it may not be necessary for me at present to do at any length—I would say that I cannot concur in the form, though I do in the substance, of the Motion. As I understand the proposal, it is that the Estimates shall not be examined by the House, but that they shall be examined beforehand by a Committee of the House. Well, that would make the Committee of the House partners in the responsibility of the Government, which, I think, would be a most dangerous and mischievous thing, and I am not at all sure that the result would be economy. I think it is just as likely, by relaxing the responsibility of the Government, to lead to extravagant expenditure. How can you be sure that all the Members of that Committee would be economists? I do not find that economy is recommended on one side of the House much more than on the other, because I have heard demands of all kinds from both sides of the House—demands which I have had to resist upon one side as well as on the other, though they may be all for admirable objects. I have been perfectly appalled at the demands made in discussion of such a Bill, for instance, as the Crofters Bill and upon other subjects. Then you may have a Committee which would propose expenditure. [Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA: Hear, hear!] I do not know if the hon. Baronet desires that such should be the case. [Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA: No.] You may depend upon it that you had much better keep the Government well in hand, well under control of the House, and to hold them responsible for the Estimates. If the Government does not act as the House desires, the House can deal with them. And I am sorry to say that I believe that the increased Expenditure has been quite as much the doing of this House in recent years as of the Government; and you may depend upon it that, as soon as ever Governments discover that the House of Commons desires economy, you will have economical Governments. But as long as you have demands made—it may be one day for increased pay for the Civil Service, one day for one thing and another day for another—all for most admirable objects, but which, all combined, lead to the growth of immense expenditure—so long will you have expenditure growing. I do not think, therefore, it could possibly be of any advantage to make this examination beforehand; because what would be the Estimates then when presented to this House? The Government could not be held to be responsible for them. You could not call the Government to account, or censure them on account of the Estimates. The Government would say—"It is your Committee's fault; they are partners with us." It would be a sort of Adam and Eve transaction between the Government and the Committee with reference to any transgression in the Estimates. Therefore I do not think that particu'ar form of proceeding advocated by my hon. Friends the Mover and Seconder of this Resolution would conduce to the object they have at heart. There is another objection. The objection which I have spoken of is a Constitutional revolution. It is a sin against the fundamental principle laid down by the Prime Minister the other night, because it amounts to the overthrow of the doctrine of Ministerial responsibility in recommending expenditure. There is another objection of a minor character. The proposal of my hon. Friends would require a complete alteration in the whole framework of the Business of the House, because the Estimates, by our Standing Orders, must be laid on the Table 10 days after the opening of the Committee of Supply, and an investigation of this character must last over many weeks; and, therefore, the House itself would not get the Estimates till a later period in the Session. It would alter the whole character of our proceedings; and I, therefore, do not think that this antecedent examination is one which we could accept. As to the subsequent examination of the Estimates by a body set apart for the purpose, I very much myself concur in that idea. I do think there ought to be a much more careful examination than we are able to give now to the Estimates. They should be examined both in the whole and in detail. The examination in the whole—that is, the principle of our Expenditure—ought to take place in this House; but the examination as to details might with advantage be dealt with in Committee. I do not think you can part with the jurisdiction of the House in determining the great Votes for the Services; but, as to the particulars and details of the Estimates, I should be very glad to see a more effective machinery for their examination. I hope my hon. Friends will be satisfied with this assurance, and will allow the matter to be worked out by the Committee upstairs. I am sure, from the interest which the House takes in this question, the discussion which has taken place upon it will be of a solid advantage.

Mr. JOHN WILSON: I wish to explain that I gave Notice of this Motion four weeks ago, before there was any intimation of what the Government proposed——

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member withdraw the Motion?

Mr. JOHN WILSON: Under the assurance given I wish to withdraw the Motion. ["No, no!"]

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

GREENWICH HOSPITAL FUNDS.

OBSERVATIONS.

Captain PRICE (Devonport), in rising to call attention to the distribution of Greenwich Hospital Funds, said that, if the Forms of the House would have allowed him, he should have been glad to move the Resolution of which he had given Notice, which was—

> "That, in order to keep faith with the Seamen and Marines who entered or re-engaged in Her Majesty's Service under the Regulations as to Greenwich Pensions laid down by the Order in Council of the 9th day of September 1865, the provisions of the said Order in Council should be carried out."

At the last General Election this question excited a good deal of interest at the naval ports. When he formerly brought the question before the House it had not one-tenth of the importance it had now. The number of seamen and Marines affected by the Regulations as to the Greenwich Hospital pension was now much larger than a few years ago; so that the funds of the Hospital, which were some years ago fully adequate to meet all the claims upon them, were now insufficient, and there was not enough to give pensions to all persons eligible. It might be said that, after all, it was only a small matter, as, at the most, the Hospital pension only amounted to 9*d.* per day. He could assure hon. Members, however, that it was by no means a small matter to the persons affected. They were men advanced in years, very frequently unable to do any sort of labour, and often this pension was the only thing a man had to look forward to. He knew cases in which the small pittance was the only means of support. Many men, in reliance upon the receipt of the pension at the age of 55, had not made provision for old age in benefit societies. Others, through not receiving the pension, found themselves unable to continue their subscriptions to such societies. There were now about 3,000 men who were eligible under the existing rules to pensions, who had been looking forward to them all their lives, and who now could not get them; and as years went on that number would be increased. When the Greenwich Hospital was disestablished in 1865 a bargain was entered into with the men. They were told that, for many reasons, it was desirable to disestablish the Hospital, but that their rights to it were to be respected, and in lieu of having this place to go to in their old age they might remain outside the Hospital and be granted a pension. Certain Parliamentary Papers were presented the other day, one of which was a copy of the Admiralty Circular of September, 1865. He was surprised, however to find that the Circular on which the men founded their claim to a pension —the Order in Council of 1865—had not been presented to the House. He found that the Paper which had been presented to Parliament was the copy of the Admiralty Circular of September, 1865, addressed to the in-pensioners; and he was anxious to see whether the Representatives of the Admiralty were going to rest their case on the statements contained in that Paper. It was desirable, however, to remember that that Paper also referred to out-pensioners. It is stated on the part of the Admiralty that any in-pensioner who was discharged from the Hospital would receive the same amount of out-pension as he received when he came into the Hospital. It also stated that the Act of 1865 authorized the Lords of the Admiralty to provide that if a pensioner was 55 years of age and had been a pensioner within or out of the Hospital for a period of five years he would obtain *5d.* a-day and an additional *4d.* at the age of 70. It was under those conditions that men claimed a title to pensions. They looked upon the disestablishment of the Hospital and the promise of pensions as a bargain that their rights in the Hospital were to be respected by the granting of pensions. Now, there could in his mind be no doubt that the Order in Council ought to be carried out; but, as he had said, there had been a Circular issued by the Admiralty which was headed to "in-pensioners," but which he contended from the body of it referred clearly to "out-pensioners;" and this contention he considered was proved by the fact that it was issued side by side with the Order in Council, which made no reference to "in-pensioners" at all; and, further, there were at the time only about 1,400 "in-pensioners." The Committee who had examined the question, and upon whose recommendations the scheme was based, expressly stated that the number of pensioners who might be interested in the scheme would probably be about 5,000; so that it was practically clear, and proved to demonstration, that the Admiralty Circular could not apply to in-pensioners only. In 1870, he might add, the Admiralty, in a reply to a Memorial, stated over again the conditions and amounts of pensions, and added that there was no intention on the part of Her Majesty's Government to depart from the promises which had been made to all pensioners, irrespective of any other pension which they might be enjoying. It was clear, therefore, that the Government had made the promise, and that it referred to the pensioners of the Hospital generally. But how was it that the funds of the Hospital had not been sufficient to give pensions to all the men who had a claim upon them? He thought the reason was to be found in the fact that at the time of the disestablishment of the Hospital and the institution of the pensions which were to be a *quid pro quo* correct calculations were not made by the Admiralty. Experience had shown that the money had run out, and that there was not sufficient now to give to those pensioners who were eligible under the rules. The next thing which was done with the Greenwich funds was this. The right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary (Mr. Childers) formed what was called a Pensioners' Reserve. He found that the funds of Greenwich Hospital were in a flourishing condition; and he thought that it would be an excellent thing to increase the Reserve Forces of the Crown, not at the expense of Imperial funds, but at the expense of what was really a charitable endowment, or, as the Admiralty themselves invariably designated it, "a charity;" and that had been done to the extent of some £3,000 or £4,000 a-year. In 1869, four years after the disestablishment of the Hospital, the right hon. Gentleman established this Pensioners' Reserve. whose remuneration was to be obtained from the funds of Greenwich Hospital. He arranged that those pensioners who chose to join this Reserve and come up for certain drills every year should receive a pension from the funds of Greenwich Hospital at the age of 50; whereas, if they had not joined that Reserve, they would have had to wait until the age of 55. The right hon. Gentleman stated that he had believed the number of pensioners joining this Reserve would ultimately reach 5,000 men, entailing a cost on the Greenwich funds of £19,000 a-year. He (Captain Price) was glad to say that the Reserve had been, to some extent, a failure, and that it had only drawn on those funds to the extent, as he had said, of between £3,000 and £4,000 a-year. That was a considerable drain on the funds of Greenwich; and he did not see why payment should be made to the Naval Reserve out of an endowment like the Greenwich Hospital, instead of from the Imperial funds. He thought he should say a word on another point. It had been thought by some of the pensioners that a great number of officers were put into Greenwich Hospital who had no right to be there; and he had often been asked—was it a fact that officers were pensioned out of the fund? Well, the matter had been thoroughly thrashed out a great many years ago, and it was found that although the names of officers were not mentioned in the Charter of the Hospital, yet from the very first they were made inmates of the Hospital, some being among the first 100 admitted; and, therefore, it was clear that they were considered as equally entitled as the men to the benefits of the institution. Well, while he made that admission, he should like to say this—that if the pensions of the men were to be restricted, the same restriction should be made *pro rata* in the case of the officers; and on this subject he had himself founded a Motion some years ago. Then he came to the responsibility of Parliament in this matter. The Admiralty were Trustees of the Hospital; and if the Admiralty were Trustees, they being under the control of Parliament, it was tantamount to saying that Parliament were the Trustees. The men held that they had a right to these pensions; but, on the other hand, the representatives of the Admiralty maintained they had no right, and that these pensions were given at the discretion of the Admiralty. But the same might be said of all pay and pensions paid in connection with the Navy; and what he wanted to know was—How was the discretion exercised with regard to Greenwich Hospital pensioners? Neither he nor the men concerned meant to contend that they had a legal right to the pensions; but custom, to a great extent, made the law, and was, indeed, the foundation of the Common Law of England; and such pensions had, at all events, always been paid as a matter of certainty from 1865 up to the year 1878. In what respect were these Greenwich Hospital pensions more under the discretion of the Admiralty than any other pensions and pay? The seamen pensioners had never been told that their pensions were at the discretion of the Admiralty. It would naturally be asked, What would it cost to satisfy the claims of those men eligible for the Greenwich Hospital pensions, but who did not get them, and where was the money to come from? He was informed that about £20,000 would be sufficient, and that amount would have to be paid until all the claims of those men were satisfied who entered the Service prior to the year 1878. How was the money to be found? The funds of Greenwich Hospital had been very carefully nursed, especially in recent years; but he thought there should be a re-investment. There was the large sum of £1,500,000 of Greenwich Hospital property still invested in Consols; and it would be wise to re-invest £1,000,000 of that in some securities, which would give a better interest than Consols. He believed there was no money invested in Australian, Cape of Good Hope, or Canadian securities. Well, by re-investing the sum he had referred to in those securities it would give something like £7,000 or £8,000 a-year of the required sum. Then, by the Government giving up the remuneration which they now gave to the Pensioners' Reserve, and by placing it as a charge on the Navy Estimates, they might realize £3,000 a-year for the purpose. There was another source from which funds might be got. At Greenwich there was a school in which provision was made for the support of 1,000 boys. The Government had a right to enter these boys in the Navy; and, as a matter of fact, something over 100 boys entered the Naval Service from that school. He would ask, why should not the Government pay Greenwich Hospital for these boys, as they did in other cases? The Government paid £25 for each boy they got from the training ships in the Thames or other places; but there was not even a Government grant given to this school. If the Government would pay for these boys, it would give £2,500 towards the £20,000 which he maintained was necessary. Finally, if the age for second instalments was changed from 65 years of age to 70, that would release another £4,000 a-year, making in all nearly about the entire amount. It might be said that the pensioners themselves would not like this; but he had taken the opinion of the pensioners to the best of his ability, and he knew that the men themselves were willing that it should be done. A Petition had been sent to the Admiralty from Devonport and Plymouth, in which that had been one of the suggestions. If the sum could not be provided from the funds of the Hospital, Parliament had a deep responsibility with regard to the whole of the question; and, sooner than break faith with the seamen, it should ask for money from the Consolidated Fund if it could not be found in the manner in which he had suggested. He was quite sure that Parliament would do wisely in looking into this matter, with a view to keeping faith with the pensioners.

Mr. VANDERBYL (Portsmouth) said, he had much pleasure in seconding the Motion which had been proposed by the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Captain Price). The fact that the Mover and the Seconder sat on different sides of the House showed that this was no mere Party question. In his own constituency there were at least 2,000 naval pensioners interested; and he knew that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction and soreness prevailing in regard to it. They were under the impression that the funds of Greenwich Hospital were created in their interest, and that the terms on which they entered the Navy, according to the Order in Council of 1865, entitled them to pensions; and they felt that the promises then made should be carried out. The hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite, in stating the case of the naval pensioners, said that he was not a lawyer; but he (Mr. Vanderbyl) thought he was justified in saying that, if there was not an express contract, there was an implied contract; and, that being so, he did not think that the Admiralty would be justified in ignoring an arrangement considered equitable and fair when it was entered into. He might remind the House that before the Committee, over which the Duke of Edinburgh had presided on the subject, Captain Holland had said that it was most desirable that the soreness of the naval pensioners on this question should be overcome; and Captain Chanwick, of the American Navy, had expressed himself to the effect that a large body of naval pensioners, going back to the places where they came, acted as a leaven through their discipline, resources, energy, and honesty among other classes. It was essential that a just grievance of that kind should be remedied. There was just one other point with which he would trouble the House. On going into Hospital reductions had been made from the pensions of the men disproportionate to the reductions made from the pensions of the officers; and he ventured to submit that if it was necessary that those reductions should be made it was only right and fair that the reductions should be made in the same proportion all round. If the special pensions were done away with there would be more money for the regular seamen, who were so well entitled to their pensions. With those few remarks, he begged to second the Motion of the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

Sir JOHN GORST (Chatham) said, that it was the duty of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, as Trustees of this charitable fund, to endeavour to make the most profitable investment of these funds, to protect the property from any misappropriation; and, in the third place, so to regulate their management that they did not hold out any expectations to the seamen which they were not able to perform. If some private person were Trustee of that property, and had to administer it for the benefit of the pensioners, he would probably sell the buildings and site, and invest the proceeds for the benefit of the persons interested. But, the Trustees being the Board of Admiralty, it was proposed to let the buildings at the absurdly inadequate rent of £100 a-year. The amount of money which was by that means diverted from its proper and legitimate object was no less than £3,000 per annum, and he asked the Secretary to the Admiralty to put a stop to that. He had in vain repeatedly asked for an explanation of this singular course of action. It was nothing less than a misapplication of the funds to let the buildings for the purpose to which they were applied at this nominal rent. The Seamen and Seamen Pensioners' Reserve Force had been proved before H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh's Committee to be practically a failure. There were only 6,750 men in the force, and it was certainly a misappropriation to apply the fund in any way for the benefit of the active service. Then they ought to pay for the boys who were trained for the Navy just as they paid any other training ship or school. He would ask that the steps taken should be retraced, and that the fund should henceforth only be applied to its proper purposes. Then an obvious breach of faith had been committed against the Greenwich pensioners. The terms of the pensions had been settled in 1870, and it was expressly provided that the pensions to be provided out of the fund should be in addition to any others to which the pensioners had been entitled. But now all were to be reduced to a dead level, and the promises made in 1870 had not been fulfilled. He hoped they would hear nothing about legal obligations of the Admiralty. It was not a question of legal obligation, but of honour. It was the duty of the Board of Admiralty, who had this large property under their charge, to administer it for the benefit of the pensioners. If they let the property at all, it was obvious that it should be let at its full value, and the proceeds devoted to the objects of the fund. He earnestly hoped that the Board would consider the matter in a generous spirit, and if they did so they would see that the complaints which had been made were not ill-founded.

SIR JOHN COMMERELL (Southampton) said, that this question was a burning one among a very large number of seamen, and would in the future have a great deal to do with the entry of men into the Service, because there was a widespread feeling that the Admiralty had not kept faith with the seamen, and had by a legal quibble attempted to deprive them of their just rights. He objected altogether to the Government proposal that the pensions hitherto enjoyed by seamen when they attained 55 or 70 years of age should be converted into special pensions, which would inevitably be conferred by favour upon those who had friends in that House or in the Service, instead of upon poor and friendless men. He entirely denied that the fund was now better administered than it had been before; and he thought that it was a mistake, in these days of Board Schools, to deprive the old men of their pensions in order to increase the grant to the schools from £22,000 to £29,000. If the magnificent property at Greenwich were to be kept intact it should be at the expense of the nation, and not of these poor old sailors. If the funds were carefully administered and allocated alone to the purposes for which they were intended in 1865 there would be no necessity to ask for a contribution from the Consolidated Fund, and there would be ample means of giving the poor men that which they honestly and truly believed was their right.

SIR WILLIAM CROSSMAN (Portsmouth) said, he thought that the difference between £152,000, the income of the Hospital, and £145,000, the amount of the expenditure — namely, £7,000, together with other sums referred to in the Report of the Duke of Edinburgh's Committee, would be sufficient to provide for these pensions. If the funds did not admit of the whole amount being paid, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not refuse to grant the very small sum that would be required to complete the amount from the Consolidated Fund.

SIR EDWARD BATES (Plymouth) said, that they had had the opinion of a Naval Officer, and also a legal opinion from the late Solicitor General. He would now give the House a mercantile opinion. If the statements made by the hon. and gallant Member for Devonport (Captain Price) were correct, which he verily believed them to be, he would only say, speaking as a mercantile man, that neither he nor any other mercantile man of standing would deny that there had been a gross and wilful misapplication of the funds applicable to these pensions. The idea of letting Greenwich Hospital for £100 a-year was simply folly. The Government had better have taken the place for nothing than have committed an act of that kind. Instead of investing these funds in the Three per Cents the Admiralty should have invested £1,000,000 of them in the Guaranteed Four per Cents which had been lately issued. They would then have more than enough to give these men their right and their due. He had given them now what he considered a mercantile opinion, and he should be glad if the hon. Gentleman the Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Duff) would state that after what he had heard that night he gave the matter a full and favourable consideration.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, he protested against the fact that in the question of the legal right to these pensions the Admiralty had acted as judges in their own cause. A good deal had been said about finding ways and means to meet the extra charge involved; but he had to point out that there was a fund which actually belonged to the seamen of the Fleet, and that was the savings on the provisions of the Fleet. These savings, he believed, amounted to something like £34,000 annually, which would meet the extra charge and leave a balance of £14,000 besides. That fund, belonging not to the nation, but to the seamen, ought to be applied for the benefit of the seamen. This was a question of contract, and any departure from the spirit of the Circular of 1865 was a breach of faith utterly unworthy of any Department.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said, that when urging seamen to remain in the Navy on account of the good pensions which had been promised them, he had frequently been met with the rejoinder that the promises might be altered any day by an Order in Council. The men said they were never sure of getting what had been promised them. In his own experience he had had to wait no less than 16 years before he received some small prize money to which he was entitled. That was a usual occurrence, and he wished to impress on the House that these things rankled in the breasts of the seamen. Even in a financial point of view, there was no more expensive way of engaging men for any employment than to do so under circumstances in which the men had not confidence that faith would be kept with them. He hoped the Government would look at the matter not from a strictly legal, but from a point of view in every sense of the word liberal.

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. R. W. DUFF) (Banffshire) said, that the subject raised by the hon. and gallant Member for Portsmouth (Sir William Crossman) was one of very great interest to the Naval Profession, and especially to the men. He should like, in the first place, to notice the point referred to by almost every speaker, and that was the assumed breach of faith on the part of the Admiralty with regard to the Circular of 1865. Now, when Greenwich Hospital was abolished there were two sets of provisions. In the first place, there was a Circular issued to the in-pensioners, which said that any in-pensioner would receive a specified amount per day "whether he is in or out of the Hospital." But the naval pensioners who had formed the subject of the present debate had been dealt with in an entirely different manner. They were dealt with by an Order in Council, which was the outcome of the Act 28 & 29 *Vict.*, and issued in 1865. The Circular was very distinct in its terms—

> "An extra pension of 5*d.* per day may, at the discretion of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, be granted to seamen and Marines now in receipt of pensions who are over 55 years of age."

The two classes of pensions were quite distinct. Now, with regard to the original Circular. When Greenwich Hospital was abolished the intention was to have a limit of 5,000. It was true that was not stated in any Circular; but there was no doubt about the intentions of the Admiralty.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present: House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. R. W. DUFF, resuming, said, that things went on so until 1869, when the maximum of 5,000 was exceeded. In 1878 Sir Massey Lopes held the Office which he (Mr. Duff) had now the honour to hold. He spoke with the greatest possible respect of Sir Massey Lopes, whose personal friendship he had the honour to claim, and who had left behind him the character of a strong

Civil Lord of the Admiralty. But Sir Massey Lopes took too sanguine a view of the resources of Greenwich Hospital. The original intention might have been carried out, he believed, but for the alterations made in 1878. In the first place, the age was reduced to 65 from 70. That involved an increased charge upon Greenwich Hospital of between £10,000 and £12,000 a-year. Then 200 boys were added to the school, which made another increase in charge to the amount of £5,000, so that about £15,000 a-year more would have fallen on the funds. The hon. and gallant Admiral the Member for Southampton (Sir John Commerell) was anxious to put a pensioner's coat on every seaman's back; but you must cut your coat according to the cloth. The hon. and gallant Admiral was on the Board in 1879, and he (Mr. Duff) did not find that any step was taken by the Colleagues of the hon. and gallant Admiral in the direction now advocated.

Sir JOHN COMMERELL said, that he was not on the Board until the latter part of 1879.

Mr. R. W. DUFF said, that they had now reached the limits. They were already spending £98,000 a-year, and the scheme proposed would involve an additional £15,500, which would bring up the entire sum spent on pensions to £113,500. He did not think they would be justified, having regard to the other charges, to spend £113,500 in that way. The appropriation of Greenwich Hospital was as follows:—Superannuations and maintenance of painted hall, &c., 2 per cent; pensions to officers and education allowance to children, 5½ per cent; pensions to seamen and Marines, and maintenance in hospitals, 64¼ per cent; education of children of seamen, &c., 21 per cent; pensions to widows, &c., and gratuities to relatives, 1¼ per cent; cost of administration, 2 per cent; surplus, 4 per cent; total, 100 per cent. The hon. and gallant Member for Devonport (Captain Price) dwelt upon the question of granting £3,000 a-year towards the pensions of Reserves. That was a matter open to discussion. It had been before the Admiralty, and all he could say was that it had been submitted to the Treasury, and was now under consideration. The hon. and learned Member for Chatham (Sir John Gorst) found fault with the way in which the Admiralty dealt with Greenwich Hospital buildings, and thought that they ought to be sold. Under the Greenwich Hospital Act of 1869 power was conferred upon the Admiralty to permit the buildings to be occupied temporarily for the purposes of the Naval Service. When the Hospital was closed in 1869 these vast buildings had to be maintained at the charge of Greenwich funds. The buildings were historical and of great architectural merit, and it was not practicable to relieve Greenwich funds by selling the buildings or letting them for commercial purposes. The cost of maintenance was about £3,400 a-year. In 1873 the Admiralty decided to utilize the buildings for the purposes of a Naval College, and from that date all charges in connection with the buildings so appropriated had been transferred to naval funds. A nominal rent of £100 a-year was paid, and it was a condition that the buildings were to be kept in thorough repair, and might be re-occupied for the purposes of a hospital if required. With regard to the Greenwich Hospital landed estates the charge for management was no doubt very large. It came to 47 per cent. He might say that the Admiralty were considering the matter, with the view of seeing whether the charge could not be reduced.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present: House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjoured at Eight o'clock
till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 29th March, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland) (36).

Second Reading — Committee negatived — Consolidated Fund (No. 2).*

Committee — Report — Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order * (38).

Report — Justices' Jurisdiction * (43); Law of Evidence Amendment (44).

Royal Assent—Consolidated Fund (No. 1) [49 *Vict.* c. 4]; Marriages Validity [49 *Vict.* c. 3]; Glebe Loans (Ireland) Acts Continuance [49 *Vict.* c. 6]; Drill Grounds [49 *Vict.* c. 5].

GREAT BRITAIN—CULTIVATION OF TOBACCO.

OBSERVATIONS. QUESTION.

Lord HARRIS, in rising to call attention to the penalties imposed by certain Acts of Parliament on the cultivation of tobacco in the United Kingdom, and to ask Her Majesty's Government if they will give facilities for experiments being undertaken in its cultivation and preparation? said, the subject to which he wished to call attention was one that affected agriculture; and the serious and deplorable condition of that great trade at the present moment justified him, he thought, in bringing it before such an Assembly as the House of Lords, representing so thoroughly, so eminently, and so practically as it did the great agricultural interest, the more so as it possibly pointed out a direction in which, as regarded certain parts of the country, a remedy might be found for agricultural depression. When he first considered the subject, he thought it would be entirely impossible not to ask for some measure of protection. Close consideration, however, had convinced him that it was unnecessary to do that, and that all he need ask the House was that the home might be placed exactly upon the same footing as the foreign producer. He did not know whether their Lordships were aware—he was quite satisfied the general public was not aware—that in England—Free Trade England—which had endeavoured, unsuccessfully, it was true, to cram Free Trade down the throats of every other country, which had strutted on the world's stage as the one true exponent of thoroughly sound commercial principles—Protection in its rankest form existed. And for whom? Not for the benefit of the English producer or for the English farmer, but for the benefit of the foreign producer. It was the fact that the law of this country enacted that a protective duty of no less than 500 per cent should be given to the foreign producer, and that the English producer should not be allowed to grow that particular plant. It had been objected that tobacco could not be grown in England, and that the grower could not compete against the import duty. He did not require to rest his case on mere theories. He should be able to show that tobacco had been grown as far North as Scotland; that it was cured and prepared in the same country; that at one time—unfortunately many years ago—it was in considerable cultivation in England, and that at the present day in Belgium, whose climate approached very closely indeed to that of England, it was in most thriving cultivation. It was not a question of competing with an import duty. He would presume that an Excise duty was put on equivalent to the import duty; and then the question was, whether they could produce an article of equal quality to the worst quality of tobacco introduced into this country, and whether the price given for that worst quality of tobacco was not sufficient to leave a margin between the cost of production and the selling price. There was one other objection raised, and that was that we had not sun enough in this country in order to prepare tobacco for market. It was a mistake, however, to suppose that all tobacco introduced into the market in England was sun-dried. There was a large quantity sold in the market very readily which was dried, both in America and Belgium, in open air shades by a system of wood fires, and there was no reason why the same should not be done here. He would shortly call attention to the anomalous Statutes by which the cultivation of tobacco in this country was prohibited. By 12 *Charles* II., c. 34, it was enacted that—

> "No person after January 1, 1660, shall set or plant any tobacco under penalty of forfeiture of crop and of 40*s*. per rod of ground so planted."

That was equivalent to a duty of £320 per acre. This penalty failing to stop the cultivation of the plant another Act was passed—the 15 *Charles* II., c. 7, ss. 15, 16, and 17—by which the tax of £320 was raised to £1,600 per acre, and that existed to the present day. The Act 22 & 23 *Charles* II. imposed a further penalty of 5*s*. on all officers in whose district tobacco was found under cultivation, and that measure seemed to have had the effect of stopping the cultivation of the plant in England. The 22 *Geo*. III. recited 12 *Charles* II., and extended its provisions to Scotland. The 1 & 2 *Will*. IV., c. 13, repealed the Act 19 *Geo*. III.—which he could not find—

> "For repealing so much of several Acts as prohibit the growth and produce of tobacco in Ireland, and to permit the importation of tobacco of the growth and produce of that kingdom into Great Britain."

Sir John Sinclair, in his General Report of Scotland, stated that—

> "During the American War this article of very generally diffused luxury became so dear that several unsuccessful attempts were made in Scotland for its cultivation. The chief seat of that new culture was in the neighbourhood of Kelso," where "it succeeded so well that 16½ statute acres at Crailing brought £104, or £6 7*s.* 4*d.* per acre, being purchased by the Government at 4*d.* per pound."

From the Agricultural Survey of the County of Roxburgh, dated 1794, it appeared that—

> "Tobacco was first grown at Newstead, and eventually many hundred acres of land were cropped with it. The profits were amazingly great; but an Act of Parliament put an entire stop to its cultivation."

Sir John Sinclair in 1830 expressed his opinion, derived from the experiments of 1782, that tobacco might be grown at considerable profit. Mr. Train also gave evidence that land let for tobacco cultivation used to let at £5 an acre when other land was only fetching £2. The growth of the plant was carried on in six English shires and five Scotch. But the crop was never much cultivated in England because the statutory prohibition had been continuously in force, whereas it was for some time taken off in Ireland and Scotland. But individual experiments in gardens and small areas had been made from time to time with considerable success. A more extensive experiment was made in the Vale of York for a few years before 1782, which had to be abandoned because the penalties laid amounted to £30,000. As we had long since lost the Colonies on whose behalf the heavy tobacco duty was imposed it seemed unreasonable to continue the duty in the present day. In Ireland the duty was removed in 1822, but was reimposed about 1830. By 1829 or 1830 there were no fewer than 1,000 acres under tobacco cultivation; but upon that question he might refer their Lordships to the evidence given before the Commission of 1832. The effect of that evidence shortly was that an average crop was 1,000 lbs. an acre, and the average cost of production from £20 to £30; that a great improvement was noticed in the condition of the people where it was grown; that three crops could be taken off the land in as many years, and that it was an excellent preparation for cereal crops. It might be questionable whether, if cultivated in this country, tobacco would bear a duty of 3*s.* 6*d.* per lb.; but it must be remembered that we were rapidly becoming accustomed to a much smaller margin of profit than was required by our forefathers. He would read a short and amusing extract from Fairholt, which showed the advantages which had formerly accrued from the cultivation of tobacco in this country—

> "It had been extensively grown in Gloucestershire, as appears from the following passage in 'Harry Hangman's Honour, or the Gloucestershire Hangman's request to the Smokers and Tobacconists of London,' a quarto pamphlet in the King's Collection, June 11, 1655. He says:—'The very planting of tobacco hath proved the decay of my trade, for since it hath been planted in Gloucestershire, especially at Winchcourt, my trade hath proved nothing worth.' He adds: 'Then 'twas a merry world with me! for indeed before tobacco was there planted, there being no kind of trade to employ men, and very small tillage, necessity compelled poor men to stand my friends by stealing of sheep and other cattel, breaking of hedges, robbing of orchards, and what not.'"

He had also had the advantage of receiving a letter from a Flemish farmer, dated the 12th instant. The writer said that the best soil for tobacco growing was a dark, rich, peaty, and not too stiff soil in a well-sheltered locality. Manual labour and much manure were required; but when the manure was put in four or five crops of cereals could be taken with scarcely any additional dressing. The writer generally sowed the seed in the open, but said that hot beds were preferable. The gathering took place in September, and was performed by adults, though children took part in certain subsidiary operations. The cost was estimated as follows:—Manures, £17 9*s.* 4*d.*; labour, £17 9*s.* 4*d*; rent, rates, and taxes, £5 6*s.* 8*d.*—total, £40 5*s.* 4*d.* To this had to be added a duty of two centimes a plant, which was much lower than the English duty. An ordinary year yielded 2,700 lbs. an English acre, of which 70 per cent was first quality and 30 per cent second and third quality. The first quality sold at 6½*d.* per lb., and the second and third at about 4½*d.* The net profit was about £26 an acre. The industry had made the fortune of the frontier town of Blandain, and enabled it successfully to tide over the present agricultural crisis. He could not, of course, assume that so large a crop could be raised in this country as in Belgium; but even assuming the Irish average of 1,000 lbs. an acre, and putting the cost of production as high as 6½*d.* per lb., the estimate of the Excise officers as produced in evidence in 1829, it was clear that a good profit might be made out of tobacco cultivation in this country. Tobacco had been grown in Scotland and in Ireland, and it was now grown successfully in Belgium; and these figures showed that we might be able to grow it, and to have a profit of £8 per acre. Even if this figure were too high an enormous margin for profit still existed; for the profit on 1 lb. weight of wheat, at 40*s.* per quarter, and four quarters of 60 lbs. per bushel per acre, only came to ¼*d.*, out of which had to be paid rent, rates, and taxes; whereas between 6½*d.* per lb., the estimated cost of producing tobacco, including rent, rates, and taxes, and 8*d.* per lb., the average present price of the very worst quality of smoking tobacco, there was a net profit of 1½*d.* per lb. This was a cultivation which might be undertaken on small holdings, and consequently it ought to be a subject of considerable interest to noble Lords opposite, because they belonged to a Party prominent Members of which had impressed on the mind of the agricultural labourer the idea that they, and they alone, were his friends. Perhaps the most important question of all in connection with this subject was the question of the Revenue; and he admitted that a Revenue which brought in from £8,000,000 to £9,000,000 ought not to be lightly tampered with. He was not asking for any measure of Protection; he was only asking that an Excise Duty equivalent to 3*s.* 6*d.* per lb. should be levied on all home-grown tobacco. There were three ways in which this might be done. There might be an acreable tax; but there would be some difficulty in this plan, because unless a system of guarantees were established he thought it was doubtful whether men could be found to put down so large a sum as would be required. Then came the Excise Duty on the cured tobacco. This was undoubtedly the fairest plan, and would, he hoped, proved feasible. Lastly, the cess might be levied, as in Belgium, at so much per growing plant, worthless ones being excluded; but there was this difficulty about fixing the amount—namely, that we did not know how many plants should go to the acre. Different authorities advised different numbers, varying from 6,000 to 9,000. Still that ought not to deter them from doing justice; and to show them that it was possible to collect a tax upon tobacco he might mention that in 1864—the year of the Great War in America—taxes on 240,000 acres of tobacco cultivation were collected to the amount of $29,000,000. The suggestions he had to make to Her Majesty's Government were either that these Acts should be repealed and an Excise Duty equivalent to 3*s.* 6*d.* per lb. be put on home-grown tobacco and and the British farmer be left to himself to see what he could do, or, if the Government thought that that was too hurried a step, he suggested that, without repealing the Acts, a certain number of experiments should be authorized in England and Ireland, the area of each experiment to be limited, a registration fee to be paid, and a report of results to be sent into the proper persons. He was asking for no boon; he was asking for simple justice. His figures might prove utterly fallacious; but at present they justified him in thinking that the experiment ought to be made. He asked it not so much for the advantage of landlord and tenant—though Heaven knew they wanted encouragement bad enough—but he asked it most especially for the agricultural labouring class. He asked that a cultivation which employed more labour than any crop grown in this country might, for their sakes at any rate, be no longer prohibited by the Acts of Parliament he had cited.

Lord SUDELEY (who replied) said, that the question of the growth and cultivation of tobacco raised by the noble Lord in his most interesting speech was one which had been frequently considered by different Governments; but hitherto it had been found impossible to allow its cultivation in this country. At this moment of intense agricultural depression he need hardly say that any practical suggestion which would be likely in the smallest degree to alleviate or smooth over the difficulties our farmers were suffering from would be gladly supported by the Government. The sanguine views expressed by the noble Lord that the growth of tobacco would prove remunerative could not fail to be of great interest to everyone, and especially to their Lordships, who were great authorities on agricultural matters, and knew so well the terrible trials the agricultural interests were going through. On several occasions that this question had been raised arguments had been brought forward in favour of a certain amount of Protection being allowed; and it had always been easy to show that, if the advocates of the growth of tobacco relied upon Protection, the cultivation was impossible, as it would lead to endless smuggling and deception. The noble Lord who had brought this Motion forward stood on much stronger ground. If he understood him rightly he threw over all idea of such assistance, and boldly asserted that the cultivation must rest only on its own merits, free from all protective duties. He also stated his opinion that a profit could be made even in the face of the heavy tax of 3*s*. 6*d*. per lb., and that it could be cultivated without any loss to the Revenue. As he had said, tobacco was grown in Ireland between the years 1824 and 1830, and in Scotland to a limited extent in the years 1780, 1781, and 1782. In both cases it had the advantage of being duty free; but in Scotland it was on an extremely small scale, and even in Ireland, in 1829, the total amount of land under cultivation was only 500 Irish acres, even with that enormous advantage. This was supposed to be due to the fact that the tobacco grown was of an inferior quality to the American product, and that the great disadvantages attending the growth of tobacco from humidity and uncertainty of climate, and its general speculative character, rendered it an unprofitable crop. In 1830 a Select Committee of the House of Commons inquired thoroughly into the whole question, and their Report was so much against the cultivation and the impossibility of the industry being carried on, even if only a small duty was levied, that the growth of tobacco in Ireland was prohibited. A similar prohibition had been in force in Great Britain since the time of Charles II. The Committee reported—

> "That to levy a high Excise Duty on tobacco grown in the United Kingdom would be attended with a very great expense and a large increase in the Excise Establishment; that even under the strictest regulations and the most unremitting vigilance, the greatest frauds and abuse would be likely to prevail from the great temptation to smuggling created by a high import duty and the facility of evading any Excise law which could be enacted."

The circumstances which induced the Committee to come to that decision had not apparently altered, except so far that the Revenue which they found it so necessary to protect was, in 1830, £2,800,000, and in 1886 it was £9,000,000, and therefore the dangers were greater. In 1863 a planter from Illinois desired to grow tobacco here, and Mr. Gladstone, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, went very carefully into the question. The scheme was found impracticable, as it would have impaired the Revenue and involved an element of Protection. A subsequent investigation was made by the present Secretary of State for India (the Earl of Kimberley), when he was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and another when Lord Sherbrooke was Chancellor of the Exchequer; but in both cases it was found impossible. He would not attempt to criticize the figures the noble Lord had brought forward to show that this plant could be grown with a margin of profit. They must all sincerely hope he was right; and he knew the noble Lord had gone very carefully into the subject. But he must point out that no one who had read the Report of the Evidence of the Committee that sat in 1830 could fail to be convinced that, under the most favourable circumstances, tobacco was an extremely speculative crop, and that unless the profits were very large few would run the risks entailed in its growth. This, perhaps, in one sense, would not much matter; but in connection with Excise regulations it became important. The difficulty as to the mode of imposing the duty so as to protect the Revenue was enormous. Whether the tax should be per acre or not was doubtful. The evidence taken in 1830 showed, however, that the cultivators were not at all agreed, and that the arguments against this mode of collection were very great. In the first place, the question arose at what period the duty should be imposed and collected—when the land was first planted, or when the crop was secured. If when first planted, the speculation would be greatly increased; and if not until the crop was collected, it would be necessary to keep up a large staff of Excise officers to watch the crop. Then, in any case, as the produce must vary in quality and quantity, from superiority of soil or situation or mode of culture, the duty must fall unequally on the proprietor. The person who had the smallest and least valuable crop would pay a heavier amount of duty in proportion than the individual who had the most profitable crop. The other plan, and which was certainly the fairest and most equitable, was to place the duty on the actual quantity produced. Unfortunately this involved an enormous expense, owing to the necessity of having the crop watched day and night for nearly two months; and when the crop after constant pruning was at last picked, it had to be placed in specially erected buildings for drying and storing. He noticed that one witness gave it as his opinion that to properly carry out this supervision the cost would almost be equal to the actual duty itself, so tremendous was the expense of guarding the Revenue. Perhaps those difficulties of Excise could be solved; and there was no doubt that if the noble Lord was right, that, notwithstanding the tax, tobacco could be grown profitably, some scheme must be adopted. He must, however, point out to the noble Lord that in his calculation of the cost of the tax per acre he had forgotten to take into account the cost of collection, which must be added. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in answering a Question on that subject the other day, said that the Government were anxious to obtain information. The Government had gone very carefully into the question, and they thought that at the present time it was most necessary that any possible suggestion that could be made of a practical character likely to assist agriculture should be looked into. They saw the difficulty of collecting the Revenue, and the danger to it that would flow from these experiments; but they would be willing to try the experiments in certain localities in the way suggested by the noble Lord. These experiments were, of course, to be made subject to certain restrictions. These restrictions would be very much as stated by the noble Lord—namely, that due notice should be given to the Inland Revenue of the quantity to be sown, that the localities should be within an easy distance of the Excise officers, and that duty should be payable on any produce fit to smoke. Of course, no legislation would be necessary in order to carry out these experiments. The Government hoped that by these experiments some solution would be found of the difficulties which he had endeavoured to enumerate. The Government sincerely hoped that the noble Lord might prove his case, and that it might be found possible to grow tobacco in this country without in any way interfering with the Revenue.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN said, the noble Lord who had just sat down (Lord Sudeley) had stated that the cultivation of tobacco in Ireland was not successful; but he wished to point out one reason why it was not so. Although tobacco had been allowed to be cultivated in Ireland, it was not permitted to be manufactured there, and an import duty had to be paid on Irish-grown tobacco coming into this country. Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that the growing of tobacco in Ireland did not reach very large proportions. At the same time, all the evidence given by the growers before the Committee in 1830 was to the effect that tobacco was a very profitable crop in Ireland. He also wished to point out that the weight of evidence went to show that it was grown at a profit in Scotland. The noble Lord had mentioned the evidence of one witness, to the effect that tobacco was not a source of profit in that country; but he would refer the noble Lord to the statements of his noble Friend (Lord Harris) with respect to its having been grown in Roxburghshire and Wigtonshire. He (the Earl of Dunraven) had another extract on the subject, from *The Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, Edinburgh, in 1830—

> "That the tobacco plant may be produced to any extent in the British Islands is beyond a question. It grows in all the temperate zones to a high latitude. It is cultivated extensively in Germany, and the Low Countries, and even in Sweden. It required all the intemperate laws of King James and his Successors to repress its progress in England. During the American War, and previous to the application to Scotland of the prohibitory laws by the Act of 1782, it was cultivated on the banks of the Tweed and Teviot with the most promising results. This Act overtook the planters in the midst of their labours, and compelled them to root up their plantations and dispose of the produce to Government at a third part of its market price. But this is not all. The plant had at length taken root in Ireland, notwithstanding the absurd anomaly in the law, which allowed the cultivation of the plant, but

not its manufacture afterwards. Suited in a remarkable manner to cottage culture and the state of small possessions existing in that country, there cannot be a doubt that the cultivation required only a beginning to extend itself over the whole of the Island. If the power of cultivating it were freely given, not only would an odious tax on the social comforts of the people be lessened, but a new channel would be opened for the employment of their industry. At a time when complaints are everywhere loud of want of employment, and an excess of labourers, it surely cannot be wise to persist, by a series of laws more harsh and barbarous than any other upon the same subject in Europe, in shutting out thousands of our countrymen from a means of employment in their own country."

The plant had taken root in England, notwithstanding the absurdly anomalous state of the law, and there could not be a doubt that it only needed encouragement to extend itself to the whole of the Island. The want of success which had attended its cultivation proved, not that the plant was not suited to the soil, but that the industry had not had fair play. There was no doubt that tobacco of fair quality could be grown in these Islands. It was very largely grown in Belgium, where there was a climate much the same as our own, and in climates not much better than our own in the United States. It was not generally known what a large proportion of the whole tobacco crop of the United States was raised in the Northern States. In Massachusetts and Connecticut large quantities of tobacco, especially adapted for certain purposes, were grown and exported to Cuba for making wrappers of cigars. Within the last few years Pennsylvania had become the third largest tobacco-growing State in the Union. The tobacco-producing area laid mainly in York and Lancaster counties, in the neighbourhood of Delaware Bay, a district famous for east winds and fogs at least equal to our own, and in which the climate would not be generally thought favourable for tobacco cultivation. With regard to the cultivation of tobacco paying, whether his noble Friend (Lord Harris) was correct in saying that British tobacco could compete with foreign tobacco, he did not know, and he confessed that he did not quite follow his noble Friend's reasoning that, because a profit could be made upon wheat, therefore tobacco could be grown at a profit. His (the Earl of Dunraven's) impression was that wheat could not be grown at a profit at all. But, from his point of view, he held very strongly that the cultivation of tobacco was a matter of very great importance. Agriculture, as they all knew, was in a very depressed condition, and anything that tended to revive it would be a godsend, not only to the agricultural community, but to the whole population of the country. Then, tobacco was singular in this—that it required very little capital, and a great deal of labour, and that labour was required chiefly at a time when there was very little doing in agricultural matters. He believed that if tobacco were grown here it would be of enormous benefit. The evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, though conflicting, went overwhelmingly to show that there was an improvement in the material circumstances and the moral condition of the people of Ireland where tobacco was grown. Even if it were necessary, to favour the production of home-grown tobacco on a large scale, that the Excise Duty should be less than the Import Duty, he believed it would be a wise and prudent thing, and true wisdom, to place the Excise Duty at a sufficiently low figure to allow of the cultivation. He did not mean to say that it would be wise to allow the Revenue to suffer; for while the present Government remained in Office—judging from past experience—they must expect to have increased expenditure, further depression of trade, and a shrinkage in their resources; and, therefore, it would be very unwise to hamper such a source of Revenue as tobacco. But even if the Excise Duty should not be so high as the present Import Duty, the Revenue might not suffer in any way. The first effect of the competition would be to reduce the price of foreign grown tobacco, as the growers abroad would have to reduce the price in order to compete with the growers at home, and prices must be cheapened, to the great benfit of those who used tobacco. The consumption would thus be largely increased, and even if the Excise Duty were reduced below the Import Duty, the Revenue would not suffer. But he would not speak about this aspect now. He was well content that Her Majesty's Government should allow experiments to be made; and he understood that the Government would allow any amount of land to be cultivated, subject to the conditions laid down.

LORD SUDELEY: The experiments must be on a small scale, to be made by responsible persons.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN, continuing, said, if only a small amount of tobacco were grown and cured, there might be a difficulty in finding a sale for it. The noble Lord must remember that all connected with the trade—importers, brokers, and middlemen—would be entirely opposed to the experiment. All the importers and brokers who were examined before the Committee of 1830 spoke strongly against the proposal, and all the growers were strongly in favour of it. There would be an enormous interest opposed to the growing of tobacco at home; and if only a small quantity was to be grown, he failed to see how a market was to be found for it. He should have thought that, under the restrictions which the noble Lord had announced, Her Majesty's Government would have allowed any quantity to be grown, provided the Excise Duty paid was equal to that of the Import Duty. He could not conceive that there could be any difficulty in collecting the Excise Duty, any more than any other duty. He hoped and trusted that Her Majesty's Government would reconsider this matter, and would see whether, under the restrictions which had been set forth, they could not allow of the cultivation on a large scale, so that the producers might have a reasonable chance of obtaining a sale of the article produced.

THE EARL OF IDDESLEIGH said, he congratulated his noble Friend (Lord Harris) who had brought that subject forward on the excellent speech he had made, and also on the result he had so far obtained. He was glad that Her Majesty's Government proposed to institute experiments on that important question. He did not like to forecast what might be the result of those experiments. They would have to be conducted with very great care, because they would apply to a matter of very large financial importance. They had to bear in mind that an enormous amount of Revenue might be affected, and that when they were instituting anything in the nature of an excise, and a very heavy excise, on an article of home growth, it was absolutely necessary to take precautions by restrictions on the cultivation of the article which could not fail to be felt to be annoying and to a certain extent discouraging. However, it was important that the experiments should be tried in order to ascertain as well as they could whether it was possible for the Revenue Authorities to provide means of checking and preventing fraud on the Revenue without imposing such burdensome and inconvenient restrictions on the cultivation of tobacco as would destroy its successful prosecution. If there should be very heavy restrictions and very inconvenient precautions employed to prevent fraud upon the Revenue they might render it impossible to cultivate the plant at such advantage as would make it profitable. However, the subject appeared to have been fairly considered by the Government, and he, therefore, hoped that notice would be issued as soon as might be of the conditions upon which the experiments were to be tried. If they were to be tried, it was very desirable that it should be done soon, and that, if possible, a season should not be lost in the matter. He did not know whether the Government would be able to give the notices quickly, but, undoubtedly, it was very desirable that they should do so.

LORD NORTHBOURNE said, that the farmers of this country were apt to say that Parliament took little interest in agriculture; but he was quite sure that was not the case, and that noble Lords on the Ministerial side were anxious to do as much good for the interests of agriculture as noble Lords opposite. He would also point out that very crude and absurd notions were afloat in regard to the waste land existing in this country, and its capacity for profitable cultivation.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said, he would not enter into the question whether the Liberals or the Conservatives were best entitled to be called the farmers' friends; but he wished to ask whether it was intended by the Government that the proposed experiments with respect to the cultivation of tobacco would apply to Scotland as well as to England and Ireland, and in what relative proportion as to acreage between the three countries?

LORD SUDELEY said, he believed that it was not quite decided what experiments should be carried on, or whether it might not be desirable to consult with the Royal Agricultural Society on the subject. That point was still under consideration.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS asked whether they would not apply to the Three Kingdoms?

LORD SUDELEY said, he thought it was intended that they should apply to the Three Kingdoms; but the point was not yet settled.

LAW OF EVIDENCE AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 44.)

(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

REPORT.

Amendments *reported* (according to Order).

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN, in rising to move to leave out Clause 5, which provided that prisoners on being called upon to give evidence as witnesses should not be cross-examined, said, that the Amendment had been introduced at the suggestion of the noble and learned Lord (Lord Halsbury); but it was very doubtful whether the effect would not be to lead to a miscarriage of justice. While the prisoner might give his evidence and be guarded from cross-examination, a prosecutor would be liable to be cross-examined and have his whole character inquired into. He could imagine a prosecutor who had been guilty of some immorality during his life, and that fact might be dragged before a jury to the benefit of the prisoner, and thus the ends of justice would be defeated.

Moved, "That Clause 5 be left out of the Bill."—(*The Earl of Milltown.*)

LORD HALSBURY said, that the question was whether they would allow the prisoner to make a statement. It was not a question whether they would allow him to be cross-examined as the prosecutor would properly be cross-examined. The noble Earl (the Earl of Milltown) spoke of the prisoner and prosecutor as if they were rivals. That idea, of course, was untenable. The jury would draw the inference from the evidence. In his opinion the result of the Bill, without such a provision as Clause 5, would be to invert the whole system of our administration, and it would be calculated to do mischief if it were adopted without the restriction there laid down.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK said, he was obliged to differ from his noble and learned Friend (Lord Halsbury). If a prisoner voluntarily put himself in the position of a witness he ought to be subject to the same kind of cross-examination as that to which other witnesses were exposed. In order to get rid of one anomaly his noble and learned Friend proposed to introduce another. The man having elected to come forward as a witness, on what possible ground could they protect him from the consequences of his own choice?

LORD BRAMWELL said, that in two recent Statutes—the Explosives Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act—the principle had been admitted that the person accused might give evidence in his own case; but there was no clause in either of those Acts similar to that of which the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Milltown) had moved the omission. He (Lord Bramwell) would have submitted to their Lordships' former decision; but as the omission of the clause had been moved, he must vote for it.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS (Lord ESHER) said, he spoke from a legal experience of 40 years, 18 years of which he had spent on the Bench. With regard to some things which had been said, it should be remembered that the Crown had no desire to convict a prisoner; and if the case depended solely on the evidence of the prosecutor, and the prosecutor was shown not to be a credible person, no conviction would ever be obtained. Criminal trials differed from civil, and no Judge, he was sure, would ever allow a jury to convict unless he himself was certain of the prisoner's guilt. He would ask their Lordships to imagine what the state of feeling would be if a timid and ordinarily ill-educated prisoner was made to say something under cross-examination which he did not want to say, and which would put him in a position of the greatest jeopardy. His conviction, under such circumstances, would not improbably lead the spectators to sympathize with the criminal rather than with the law. It should be borne in mind that a great end to be arrived at in a criminal trial was not only to secure a conviction, but to secure sympathy with the conviction; and with that view, although he somewhat objected to the wording of it, he supported the clause.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, he had no strong view on the subject. No doubt, the clause was not logical; but the Bill itself was not wholly logical, and the clause would only add another anomaly to the Bill. He was in favour of the measure, which would be a great advantage to the innocent man, and would lead to the conviction of the guilty; but though the clause might pass their Lordships' House, he knew what would be said of it in "another place." It would be said—"Fancy a poacher brought before county magistrates and asked whether he had ever been guilty of poaching before." He thought, therefore, that the Bill was a good one with that clause; but without it the Bill would not become law.

On Question, Whether the said Clause shall stand part of the Bill? Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 31; Not-Contents 14: Majority 17.

Bill to be read 3ª on *Thursday* next.

SPORTING LANDS RATING (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 36.)

(*The Earl of Elgin.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The Earl of ELGIN, in moving that the Bill be read a second time, said, that it had already passed through all its stages in the Lower House without opposition or alteration. The object of the Bill was very simple. As the law now stood in Scotland, an assessor was bound to enter on the Valuation Roll the assessments for poor rates and other purposes on shootings and deer forests which were let; but he was not bound or entitled to enter any shootings which were unlet, or still in the hands of the proprietor. He understood that that was not the case in England, but that all shootings, whether let or unlet, were rated. It was not the first time that the anomaly which existed in Scotland had been brought under notice, because so long ago as 1871 a Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Poor Law of Scotland recommended that the shootings and deer forests in the occupation of owners be assessed for the poor at the yearly value at which they might reasonably be expected to be let for sporting purposes. The Royal Commission on the Highlands and Islands—the Crofters' Commission—reported in a similar sense two years ago. Under these circumstances, the Bill proposed to enact that in future the words now appearing in the Valuation Act dealing with this subject—"Where such shootings or deer forests are actually let"—should be omitted. It also laid down that it should be the duty of the assessor to enter separately for each parish, and of respect of each property, the yearly value of the shootings and deer forests so far as situated within such parish. The only other point of importance in the Bill was contained in Clause 6, which proposed certain rules to guide the assessors in estimating such yearly values. The valuation of shootings depended, to a certain extent, on the services of keepers and others, without whose services the sportings would be very much deteriorated in value. It was to guide the assessors, therefore, in this and other respects that the rules in the clause were laid down.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Elgin.*)

Lord BALFOUR said, he certainty thought the Bill a very wise one, and did not suppose it would encounter any opposition. He was not quite sure, however, of the wisdom of these rules for the guidance of the assessors; and he should like that some time should be allowed to elapse before the Committee stage was taken, in order to allow him to consult those who were practically engaged in the work of registration, and ask them to give the question their consideration.

Motion *agreed to*; Bill read 2ª accordingly.

House adjourned at Seven o'clock,
till To-morrow, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 29th March, 1886.

MINUTES.]—New Member Sworn—Sir William Cunliffe Brooks, baronet, *for* Chester County (Altrincham Division).

Select Committee—Ventilation of the House, Mr. Tatton Egerton and Mr. Cyril Flower *added*.

Public Bills—*Resolution in Committee*—*Ordered*—*First Reading*—Companies Acts Amendment* [158].

Ordered—*First Reading*—Prison Officers' Superannuation* [154]; Poor Relief (Ireland)*

[155]; International and Colonial Copyright* [156]; Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children) * [157].

Second Reading — Marriages (Attendance of Registrars) [121], *debate adjourned.*

Select Committee — Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) * [103], *nominated.*

Committee—Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) [118] [*First Night*]—R.P.

Committee — *Report* — Army Annual * [150]; Public Health Acts (Improvement Expenses) [7-153].

Considered as amended—Third Reading — Compensation for Damages * [120]; Marriages (Hours of Solemnisation) [62], and *passed.*

Third Reading — Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment * [10], and *passed.*

Withdrawn — Common Juries Remuneration [95].

NEW WRIT (BARROW IN FURNESS).

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY) (Nottingham, E): I beg to move—

> "That Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new writ for the election of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Barrow in Furness, in the room of David Duncan, Esq., whose election has been declared void."

MR. LEWIS (Londonderry): I wish to call the attention of the House to a Standing or Sessional Order which was in existence during the last Parliament, and which provided that whenever an election was declared void on the ground of corrupt practices, no new writ should be moved until after three days' notice had been given. Now, considering the character of this election, I think it is highly inexpedient for the House in this early stage of its existence to set the bad precedent of issuing a new writ for the election of a Member to serve in Parliament in the place of a person whose seat has been declared void, on the ground of corrupt practices, until we have had an opportunity of seeing the evidence adduced on the trial of the Petition. I entertain no doubt as to the extreme purity of the Liberal Party, and I entertain still less doubt as to the extreme purity of individual Members of the Government opposite in passing the Corrupt Practices Act; but I think we ought to know a little more about the circumstances of this case before we consent to the issue of a new writ. At present I have no knowledge of those circumstances except what I have derived from the newspapers — namely, that a Member of this House has been deprived of his seat on the ground of bribery and corrupt practices, although I do not know the nature or extent of the bribery committed. Then I think that the House ought to do what it has repeatedly done before. When there has not been sufficient evidence to justify the issue of a Royal Commission, the House has for months, aye, and even for Sessions—as occurred in the case of the Wigan Election—abstained from issuing a new writ; and I do not think that we ought to commence the labours of this new Parliament by establishing the really bad precedent which the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury asks us to set. In order to give time for the further consideration of the matter, I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Lewis.*)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL) (Hackney, S.): I had received no intimation from the hon. Gentleman that he intended to raise this question.

MR. LEWIS: I had no idea that the Motion for the issue of the writ was going to be made.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think I am correct in stating that the Report of the Election Judges was received by the Speaker, as appears from the record of our proceedings, on the 24th or 25th of March. The Standing or Sessional Order to which the hon. Member has referred is not, in fact, now in force. I do not at all dispute the fact that that does not dispose of the matter, and give a complete answer to the objection of the hon. Member, if there is reason to suppose that there was in this case any bribery or any kind of general corruption. If the hon. and learned Member will look to the Report of the Election Judges, and to the information which is within the knowledge of every Member of the House, he will see that this is a case in which there was no charge of anything like the existence of corrupt practices at all, and that the late Member for Barrow in Furness, Mr. Duncan, was unseated not on account of corrupt practices, but on the ground of an illegal practice. The illegal practice in question was, that on the day of election, after taking advice, Mr. Duncan ordered some refreshment, very moderate in amount, to be given to certain persons who had been actually working for him, and that has been held by the Judges to be an illegal practice within the meaning of the Statute. I will read what the Election Judges say about it. They say—

> "And, in further pursuance of the said Acts, we report that at the conclusion of the said Trial we determined that the said David Duncan, being the Member whose Election and return were complained of in the said Petition, was not duly elected and returned, by reason of illegal practices, within the meaning of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883, having been committed by or with the knowledge and consent of the Respondent, in reference to the said Election, and also by the Election Agent of the Respondent (with the like knowledge and consent), and we do certify in writing such our determination to you.
>
> And whereas charges were made in the said Petition of corrupt and illegal practices having been committed at the said Election, we, in further pursuance of the said Acts, report as follows:—
>
> That no corrupt practice was proved to have been committed by or with the knowledge or consent of any Candidate at such Election.
>
> That the following persons were proved at the Trial guilty of illegal practices, namely, illegal employment, to both of whom we have furnished Certificates of Indemnity:—
>
> David Duncan, the Respondent;
>
> Abraham Langhorn Garnett, the Respondent's Election Agent.
>
> We further report that there is no reason to believe that either corrupt or illegal practices have extensively prevailed at the Parliamentary Election for the Borough of Barrow in Furness, in the County of Lancaster, to which the said Petition relates."

SIR JOHN GORST (Chatham): The hon. and learned Attorney General has not replied to the objection of my hon. Friend the Member for Londonderry (Mr. Lewis). The objection of my hon. Friend was, that although there may not be a Standing Order, it has always been the determination of the House whenever an hon. Member had been unseated by an existing tribunal, and that tribunal has reported that he had been unseated in consequence of the Commission of Corrupt Practices by anybody, there should be a few days' notice before a Motion was made for the issue of a new writ, so that every Member might have an opportunity of examining the Report of the Judges who tried the Petition. In those days there was no such thing as an "illegal practice;" but it pleased the House, by an Act passed about a year before the termination of the last Parliament, to institute a new electoral offence, called "an illegal practice," and the question now is whether the same rule should not be applied to illegal practices as has been wisely applied to corrupt practices. If it is considered that an illegal practice is an offence of so venal a character that it should not necessitate any action on the part of the House, then it may be quite right that a writ of this kind should be moved; but if the House is desirous to make the Act of 1884 a reality, and not a sham, I think it would be wise for the House to apply to illegal practices exactly the same rule as has been applied to corrupt practices. If that is done, it would follow that whenever a man is unseated for the commission of an illegal practice, there ought to be three days' notice before a Motion is made for the issue of a new writ, so that hon. Members may have an opportunity of examining the Report of the Election Judges, in order to see whether there is any objection to the issue of the writ, or whether it ought to be issued as a matter of course. That is what my hon. Friend the Member for Londonderry intended, and I do not think that what the hon. and learned Attorney General said in reply has at all answered that objection.

Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned," put, and *negatived.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new writ for the election of a Member to serve in this Present Parliament for the Borough of Barrow in Furness, in the room of David Duncan, Esq., whose election has been declared void."

QUESTIONS.

—o—

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) — SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION — CROACHIE OF DAVIOT, INVERNESS-SHIRE.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Secretary for Scotland, Whether his attention has been called to a defect in school accommodation for the Presbyterian children in and about Croachie of Daviot, in Inverness-shire; and, whether he will order that steps be taken to remove the grievance?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.) (who replied) said: In answer to this Question, I have to state that the Department are now in communication with the School Board on the subject, and await a proposal from the Board, with whom the primary responsibility for the school supply rests.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND)—PAYMENT OF RATES IN THE HIGHLANDS.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Secretary for Scotland, If his attention has been directed to a printed statement lately issued by the proprietrix of South Uist, where it is alleged that the crofters and others to a large extent decline to pay their share of the parochial rates and assessments; whether he will cause inquiry to be made as to the truth of the above allegation; and, whether the arrears of rates in South Uist, if greater than the average, has any connection with the prevalent distress in the locality?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.) (who replied) said: Attention was directed to this printed statement, and the serious results likely to ensue from the non-payment of rates in various island parishes in Inverness-shire were brought under the notice of the Government by communications from the Board of Supervision and other persons. Directions were consequently given, under which a special inquiry is now being made into the whole circumstances connected with the arrears of rates and the distress alleged to exist in certain parishes in Skye. When the Report has been received it will be the duty of the Government to consider whether the inquiry should be extended to other districts, including South Uist.

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND) — OUTRAGES ON LADY GORDON CATHCART.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Lord Advocate, If his attention has been directed to a printed statement, lately issued by the proprietrix of South Uist, where it is alleged that outrages were committed by paraffin being put in her Church pew, by telegraph lines being cut, and the terrorism prevailing was such that the perpetrators of these crimes could not be discovered by the authorities, although well known in the district; whether the Procurator Fiscal at Lochinaddy investigated the circumstances; and, whether there is any information in possession of the criminal authorities to warrant the charge made that the outrages were committed by members of the South Uist Land Law Reform League, or by any of the crofters and cottars on the estate of South Uist?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): My attention has been called to this statement. In consequence of information which reached me in the autumn of 1884 regarding various outrages alleged to have been committed in South Uist, I caused an inquiry to be made by the Procurator Fiscal, the result of which as regards the specific acts mentioned in the Question was that it was ascertained that the parish church had been entered between Saturday night and Sunday morning, and that paraffin oil had been spread over certain pews, books, &c., in the church; but it was not established that oil had been placed in the pew of the proprietrix. It was also ascertained that a telegraph wire had been cut and certain other illegal acts done; but it could not be ascertained who the perpetrators of the offences were.

THE ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE—ATTENDANCE OF OFFICIALS.

MR. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.) asked Mr. Attorney General, Who is responsible for the punctual and regular attendance of the officers of the Royal Courts of Justice; is it the fact that there is great irregularity in the attendance, some officials arriving about 11.30, and leaving before 3, and, in consequence, much loss of time to the public and suitors generally; and, is there any time or attendance book for signature by the various officers and clerks, and who has the supervision of it?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL) (Hackney, S.): In answer to the Question of the hon. Member, I have to say that this matter has been brought before the Lord Chancellor, and I have received a letter from the Lord Chief Justice, who is now presiding over a Committee to which this very matter was referred. I will, therefore, ask the hon. Member not to press the Question further until a Report can be presented on the subject.

THE LAND COMMISSION (IRELAND)—FAIR RENTS—CASE OF HUGH REILLY AND PATRICK REEHILL, CLINCOOHY, CO. FERMANAGH.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it the fact that Hugh Reilly and Patrick Reehill, of Clincoohy, barony of Knockninny, county Fermanagh, served the necessary notices upon their landlord, the Rev. J. Massy Beresford, to have a fair rent fixed; whether these cases were heard at Lisnaskea on 15th October 1883, four Commissioners being present; did the fair rent fixed in both cases correspond with the old rent; is it true that the Commissioners never inspected the farms of these men; if so, was the course pursued regular; and, will the cases be reheard?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): These cases were heard by the Commissioners on the date mentioned. The fair rent fixed in both cases was the old rent, which was below the Poor Law valuation. The Commissioners heard the evidence of valuers; but they did not inspect the farms themselves. That, I understand, was a matter within their discretion. No appeal was lodged against the decision, although it was open to the tenants to do so. The time allotted for this purpose has long since passed.

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT—OUTPORT CLERKS.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, What steps the Treasury intend taking to provide for the principal clerks at present stationed at Bristol, Hull, Newcastle, Dublin, Belfast, and Leith, in view of the fact that, whereas seven principal clerks were provided for in last year's Estimates, only one principal clerk at the Customs Out-ports is provided for in the Estimates for the present year?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The offices of principal clerks having at the recent revision been struck off the establishment of the ports of Bristol, Hull, Newcastle, Dublin, Belfast, and Leith, it was not possible to provide salaries for the holders of those offices under the name of principal clerks. Their pay has, therefore, been provided with, and included in, that estimated for clerks of the first class, they being, in fact, supernumerary principal clerks employed in vacancies of first-class clerk, but paid at their old salaries. No individual lately holding the office of a principal clerk, and now redundant as such, will sustain pecuniary injury through the revision.

THE BRITISH WEST INDIES—CONVENTION WITH THE UNITED STATES.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the draft Conventions for facilitating trade between the British West Indies and the United States of America, as propounded by the Government of the United States, contained treaty proposals conferring upon those British Colonies the status and privileges of the most favoured nation; and, whether the Government of the United States have, ever since, expressed to Her Majesty's Government their unwillingness to enter into a treaty engagement to accord the most favoured nation treatment to the British West Indies; and, if so, when and under what circumstances such expression of unwillingness was made?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): The only Draft Convention proposed by the Government of the United States for facilitating trade between that country and the British West Indies will be found at page 11 of the Parliamentary Paper No. 4 Committee of 1885. The 11th Article contains a qualified and conditional Most Favoured Nation Clause. The reasons for which Her Majesty's Government were unable to agree to that Draft are given in Earl Granville's despatch of the 12th of February, 1885, in the same Paper. The Government of the United States have not since then expressed unwillingness to grant most favoured nation treatment to the British West India Colonies; but, in such correspondence as has subsequently passed, they have not given any definite answer to Earl Granville's despatch.

EGYPT—ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS—SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF'S REPORTS.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government have received, or expect soon to receive, any Report from Sir Henry Drummond Wolff on the state of Egypt; whether they propose soon to lay upon the Table that and other Papers throwing light on the internal Administration of Egypt, and especially showing the fate of the self-governing institutions recommended by Lord Dufferin, and decreed by the Khedive; showing whether there has been any real progress towards a Native Administration that can stand by itself, and a Native Army that can protect the Country, and also showing whether the Country is contented, peaceful, and fairly free from violent crime, or whether brigandage and violent crime are common; whether the administration of justice is satisfactory, and the state of the gaols creditable, or the justice is scandalously bad, and the gaols full of persons arbitrarily detained without trial, as represented by Mr. Justice West; what are the irrigation works in progress; whether any relief has been given to the cultivators of Upper Egypt, always over-taxed, and now affected by the fall in prices; whether the revenue survey is more effective, or is still as bad as represented by Lord Dufferin; whether the Crown domains are as mismanaged as has been represented; whether forced labour has been abolished, or is still actively enforced; and, whether, in regard to Mokabileh and Pension claims, and other financial questions, the Natives have had the same measure of justice as Europeans?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen) S.): Her Majesty's Government are receiving from Sir H. Drummond Wolff Reports on the various branches of the Egyptian Question, and it is probable that these Reports will be in due course laid upon the Table of the House; but, pending the continuance of Sir H. Drummond Wolff's Mission, it is not possible to find a date for their publication. With regard to the seven other Questions which my hon. Friend puts to me, he must, of course, be aware that I could not reply to them in a manner which would give to the House any information not already in its possession without far exceeding the limits which it allows to the answer to a Question. He will find ample materials for informing himself on the topics to which he calls attention in the Papers already laid, and hereafter to be laid, before Parliament.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said, he wished to explain. His hon. Friend had misunderstood his Question. He did not ask for information on the points set out in it, but whether any Papers would be laid on the Table in regard to them all.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked whether Mr. Justice West's Report had been received.

MR. BRYCE said, the Report had been received, and was now under consideration. As to the observation of his hon. Friend, he could only say that his answer was suggested by the series of seven Questions put to him. Information on these points would doubtless be found in the Papers about to be presented, but he could not say when.

STATE OF IRELAND—INFLAMMATORY PLACARDS—CASE OF ALEXANDER STEEN, CLOGER, CO. TYRONE.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is now prepared to state what course the Government intend to take in the case of Alexander Steen, stamp distributor and registrar of marriages at Clogher, county Tyrone, in reference to the evidence submitted to him as to Mr. Steen's part in issuing an inflammatory placard summoning an Orange counter-demonstration, and subsequently publishing a black list distinguishing the Orange from the Nationalist traders of Clogher by name?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say hat I made inquiry and sent an Inspector—or an official—down to make an inquiry into this matter. The information which I have obtained in response to that inquiry does not legally connect Alexander Steen with the issue of the placard referred to. The hon. Member will perceive that a particular name being affixed to a placard is not itself legal evidence against that person. I am advised that neither the placard nor the notice could be the subject of a prosecution. In the absence of any persons to come forward to give evidence in public we cannot carry the matter further.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN asked whether there was any other Alexander Steen in the district, and whether he had been asked if he was the author of these placards?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: Subject to legal correction I will state that I believe we have no right to go to him on the subject. I may point out that the mere fact of his name appearing on the circular in no way connects him with it.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (who on rising was received with cries of "Order!") said, he was perfectly in Order. He would ask whether this gentleman had ever disowned these placards, seeing that they had upon several occasions been the subject of discussion in that House and elsewhere?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: We cannot press him to own or disown them.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: I will then be obliged on Friday next to put down a Motion upon this matter.

IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS —LEGISLATION.

SIR JAMES CORRY (Armagh, Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the Government intends introducing a Bill this Session dealing with the claims urged by the National School Teachers in Ireland for improved position and increased salaries?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am sorry to say that I am not in a position to give any undertaking that this subject will be dealt with in the present Session.

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS—JERSEY GAOL.

MR. DAVID SMITH (Brighton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is a fact that in Her Majesty's prison in Jersey prisoners are shut up during the winter season from dusk till seven in the morning without the cells being warmed, without lights, and without any means of communication with a warder; and, whether he will send an Inspector to examine the prison, and report to him thereon, or to take such steps as he may think right to ameliorate the condition of the prisoners?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS): Yes, Sir. The fact is as stated in the Question of the hon. Member. I have called the attention of the Governor of the Island to the matter, and he has asked me that an Inspector of English prisons may be sent over to report on the state of the prison there. I have accordingly given instructions that this may be arranged at once. I would remind the hon. Member that the prison administration in Jersey is vested in a Prisons Board, composed of the leading officials of the Island, and not in the Secretary of State in the sense that the administration of English prisons is under the Act of 1877.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—THE TRANSIT OF VENUS.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the final Report of the Expeditions to observe the Transit of Venus in 1882, subsidised by the British Government to the extent of £14,689, has been presented; and, if not, when it will be presented?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.), in reply, said, that it was hoped that the final Report of the Expeditions would be presented in June.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE (IRELAND)—THE COLLECTOR GENERAL OF RATES FOR THE CITY OF DUBLIN.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with regard to the opinion given by the late Attorney General for Ireland, that the Collector General of Rates for the city of Dublin was entitled to make in the rate books of the city the alteration which he has made in the rate books for the current year, by adding a column for occupiers not liable for payment of rates, Under what circumstances the opinion of the late Attorney General was sought for, and whether it was given by him in his capacity as a Law Officer of the Crown; whether the present Attorney General for Ireland has been consulted on this question, and whether his opinion agrees with that attributed to the late Attorney General; whether portions of the English Rates Act of 1869, and of the English Registration Act of 1878, incorporated with "The Representation of the People Act, 1884," direct that occupiers, whether liable for payment of the rates or not, be returned for every qualification dependent upon rating; whether at the current revision of the lists of Poor Law voters in Dublin, the Revising Barrister, notwithstanding the provisions cited, is excluding from the Poor Law franchise occupiers not liable for payment of rates; and, what steps will be taken to prevent the disfranchisement of thousands of occupiers in Dublin, and to execute the purpose expressed in the Franchise Act?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The opinion of the late Attorney General was obtained from him in his capacity as Law Officer. As I mentioned before, on that particular matter, both he and the present Solicitor General, and Mr. Carton, Q.C., have given an opinion in accordance with that given by several other eminent counsel, that the Franchise Act of 1884 does not apply to the Poor Law franchise. The matter can only be solved by a legal decision, which can be readily obtained in the Courts of Law.

INDIA—ANNEXATION OF UPPER BURMAH—THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, BOMBAY.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to the following resolution passed at the Indian National Congress held in Bombay on the 28th, 29th, and 30th December 1885:—

> "That this Congress deprecates the annexation of Upper Burmah, and considers that, if the Government unfortunately decide on annexation, the entire Country of Burmah should be separated from the Indian Viceroyalty, and constituted a Crown Colony, as distinct in all matters from the Government of this Country as is Ceylon;"

whether the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce, in May 1885, expressed its desire that "Burmah may be constituted a Colony unattached to the Indian Peninsular;" and, whether, having regard to those indications of opinion from India and from Burmah in favour of the separation of the two Countries, the Government will take the question into their consideration?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH) (Lancashire, Clitheroe): The Secretary of State is aware of the Resolution passed at the Indian National Congress held in Bombay in December last, and also of the opinion of the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce expressed in May, that Burmah should be constituted a Crown Colony; but it is not, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, necessary to consider the question of separating Burmah from the Indian Empire.

INLAND REVENUE—THE SALE OF STAMPS.

MR. BERNARD KELLY (Donegal, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If a Company are prepared to pay the Government their full price for penny stamps, and if they, without fraud, are prepared to re-sell them to the public through stationers who hold licences to sell stamps at a halfpenny each, if the Government would interfere with the said stationers selling same?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The proposal in question is now under the consideration of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue; but no decision has yet been been arrived at as to whether the scheme should be sanctioned or not.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—APPOINTMENT OF WORKHOUSE MEDICAL OFFICER AND DISPENSARY MEDICAL OFFICER.

MR. HARRIS (Galway, E.) (for Mr. FOLEY) (Galway, Connemara) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that, in Ballinrobe, Castlebar, Ballina, and other Irish dispensary districts, the offices of Workhouse Medical Officer and Dispensary Medical Officer are held by different persons; whether the dispensary district of Clifden, extending sixteen miles north and south of the town of that name, and having a population of 9,593, is more extensive and more populous than any of the districts named; whether the last two occupants of the combined office of Workhouse and Dispensary Medical Officer in the Clifden District died in consequence of the pressure of overwork upon them; and, whether the Local Government Board have considered a series of Resolutions, adopted on the 17th instant by a public meeting at Clifden, setting forth the necessity, owing to the extent and population of the district, and the number of recent deaths in consequence of the want of adequate medical assistance, that two Medical Officers instead of one should be appointed; and whether this course will be taken?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Sir, the fact is as stated in the first paragraph of this Question. In Clifden, which is not so populous or so extensive as any of the other three districts named, and in about half the Unions in Ireland, the offices in question are held by the same person, as it is found that in places where the opportunities of private practice are few the combined salaries enable the Guardians to secure the services of persons of higher qualification than if they could only offer the salary appertaining to one post. The combined salaries in Clifden only amount to £180 a-year. The Local Government Board have no information as to the cause of death of the last two occupants of the office beyond a statement made in a Resolution passed at the meeting referred to; and having regard to the extreme poverty of the Union, and to the fact that the existing arrangement has been in force for 34 years, they do not feel they would be justified in interfering with the discretion of the Guardians and Dispensary Committee, or in compelling them to incur more expense.

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX—THE ASSESSMENTS.

MR. GIBB (St. Pancras, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he was rightly reported to have said that any of the Government officials, such as surveyors of taxes, connected with the assessment of Income Tax are paid either wholly or partly by commission, so as to give them an interest in raising assessments; and, whether payment by poundage or commission is not confined to collectors of taxes who are local officers?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): There was some misapprehension as to the answer I gave the other day. The Question was put with reference to "supervisors" of taxes, and I supposed it to refer to the local officials. As suggested in the Question, the local officers are alone paid by commission. The officers of the Government are paid by salary.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (IRELAND) ACT, 1878.

MR. THEODORE FRY (Darlington) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government, during the present Session of Parliament, to bring in a Bill similar to that mentioned in the Queen's Speech opening the Session of 1884, and subsequently introduced by the then Chief Secretary for Ireland, making the Irish Sunday Closing Act of 1878 permanent, and extending its provisions to the five cities and towns exempted from its full operations.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It is too early in the Session to answer positively; but we hope pretty confidently to bring in a measure similar to that which my right hon. Friend introduced in 1884.

IRISH CHURCH ACT, 1869—THE GLEBE PURCHASERS.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Government, in dealing with the case of the Irish glebe purchasers, will have regard to the condition of tenants who held their farms on terminable leases, and purchased them under the Church Act, by paying one-fourth of the purchase money, and giving an instalment mortgage for the remaining three-fourths; and, if the Government will consider whether such tenants should be admitted to participate in the relief provided by section twenty-three of "The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885," and whether some relief should be afforded to such tenants and all yearly tenants who similarly purchased, in respect of the one-fourth of the purchase money paid down, and the excess of the price paid over the true value?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I have obtained a good many replies to inquiries on the subject mentioned in the hon. Member's Question, and there will be great difficulty, probably insuperable difficulty, in the way of reducing the principal money agreed to be paid by the tenants. I am also informed that such a course would seriously affect the financial position of the Commissioners. I have consulted with my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury as to the relaxation under the 23rd section of the Purchase Act, with a view to making provision for the relief of purchasers who have not paid their instalments. For that relaxation I will co-operate with my hon. Friend.

BOARD OF WORKS (IRELAND)—SYSTEM OF CONTRACTS.

MR. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If the several contracts by the Board of Works in Ireland, especially in regard to the supply of stores, furniture, &c., to the Public Departments are open to general competition after due notice by advertisement in the leading Dublin and provincial papers; or, whether a preferential intimation is merely given to a limited number of traders to whom thereby such contracts are in consequence confined?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.), in reply, said, that the means adopted to procure articles required by contract was based upon public competition, except in cases where a supply of one or two articles, which were obtained direct from certain quarters, which were found most suitable. The supplies were obtained by public, open competition, except for some very small or special purposes, where, as in the City of Dublin, it was found that large firms would not compete. On this account circulars were sent round to certain persons.

MR. BARRY (Wexford, S.) asked, would the hon. Gentleman give the names of the firms thus invited to compete?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I am unable to do so without Notice.

MR. BARRY said, he would put a further Question on the subject.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—KINGSTOWN EAST PIER.

MR. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Kingstown Township Commissioners can obtain the charge of the footway of the East Pier, in view of the fact that, until so taken in charge by them, no expenditure out of the local rates could be made for its improvement; and, whether, if such charge cannot be given to the Town Commissioners, the Treasury will re-consider the matter, and include in the Estimates a sum sufficient to put the promenade portion in suitable condition, the same as has been done at Dover and elsewhere?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.), in reply, said, that under the Harbours Act the Commissioners of Public Works were unable to act in the manner suggested. They would offer no objection to the extension of the works from other than public funds.

AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION — CULTIVATION OF TOBACCO IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, with the view of testing the practicability of tobacco culture, he will allow experiments to be made, under proper supervision, in various parts of the United Kingdom?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): Yes, Sir. Under proper supervision I think this might be done.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE RECENT WEXFORD MAIDEN ASSIZE.

MR. BARRY (Wexford, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been drawn to the proceedings at the Wexford Spring Assizes, where, according to a report in *The Times* of 26th March,

> "Mr. Justice Johnson congratulated the Grand Jury on the fact that there were no prisoners for trial, notwithstanding the fact that eight months had elapsed since a Judge had last sat in Wexford;"

and, whether he is aware that county Wexford, for its size, contains more branches of the National League than any other county in Ireland?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It is quite true that there was a maiden Assize at Wexford this spring. The information in the possession of the Government does not enable them to decide whether the County Wexford occupies the prominent position stated by the hon. Member.

MR. BARRY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that there had since been another maiden Assize at Wexford?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY said, he was unaware of this fact.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked, if it was not the case that the Orange Society had ramifications in Wexford?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I cannot say.

MOROCCO—SLAVERY AT TANJIER—CASE OF FATTAH.

Mr. ALFRED PEASE (York) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he is aware that considerable laxity exists in allowing persons, under the name of "servants," to enter the port of Tanjier in British steamers, and also to be carried from that place for sale in the Red Sea ports; and, whether he will give such instructions to the British Minister at Tanjier to make representations to the Moorish Government, so as to induce it to take such steps as will arrest this form of the slave trade?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): No such information has reached Her Majesty's Government; but they will be glad, if the hon. Member will furnish the information on which his Question is based, to instruct Her Majesty's Minister at Tangier to make all proper inquiries, and, if necessary, to address a representation to the Moorish Government on the subject.

Mr. ALFRED PEASE (York) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been called to a case, which has been noticed by the London press, of Fattah, a negro who it is stated had been working at the port of Tanjier for the last two years, and was seized on Sunday evening the 7th March (instant), and thrown into the Tanjier dungeon by the Governor, on the plea that a former master (Hddj Hamu El-Lulisheri, now a state prisoner at Fey), from whose cruelty he escaped in 1878, claimed him as part of his estate; whether he is aware that this negro was purchased ten years ago in Constantinople, carried to Gibraltar on board a British steamer, and thence transhipped to Morocco, when he fell into the hands of Hddj Hamu El-Lulisheri, the man now lying in Fey prison; whether he is aware that, although repeated and earnest representations were made, both to the Portuguese Minister, and by the Correspondent of British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to the British Minister, Sir John Hay, and, in spite of the fact that such an arrest was contrary to Moslem law, the Moorish authorities sent Fattahoff to Fey, manacled, and with a heavy iron chain round his neck; and, whether he will communicate with Sir John Hay, and secure, if possible, the immediate release and restoration to freedom of this man?

Mr. BRYCE: The attention of the Foreign Office has not been called to the case. If my hon. Friend will state the source of his information, inquiry will be made forthwith.

NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—ATHY AND CLONMEL MODEL SCHOOLS.

Major SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true that the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland have ordered that some of their smaller model schools should be amalgamated and the head mistresses in them reduced to the rank and salary of assistants; whether the Commissioners have complied with the Petition of the Roman Catholic priests and people of Clonmel, on behalf of the head mistress of the girls' department of the model school in that town, who is a Roman Catholic; whether petitions signed by the Protestants of all denominations in the town and vicinity of Athy had been forwarded to the Board of National Education, in behalf of the head mistress of the combined girls' and infants' department of the Athy Model School, who is a member of the Church of Ireland; whether only a very small proportion of the children attending the girls' department of the Clonmel Model School are Roman Catholics, while two-thirds of those in the girls' and infants' departments of the Athy Model School are members of the Church of Ireland; whether, during the four years that the present head mistress has been in charge of the Athy Model School, over 96 per cent. of her pupils have succeeded in passing at the annual results' examinations; whether the head mistresses in model schools are appointed by open competitive examination; and, whether Her Majesty's Government would advise the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland to comply with the petitions from Athy and to leave their reforms in abeyance until they can be carried out without interfering with the vested interests of the teachers?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It appears that until recently there were two model schools in Athy, one for boys and the other for girls and infants. The attendance at the former having fallen below the standard, it was resolved to amalgamate the two schools; and as there could not be two principals, it was thought advisable to make the master, who is resident in the school house, the principal of the new school, the mistress remaining as assistant there until an opening could be found for her as principal in some other model school. No question of religion arose, as both were Protestants. I am informed that the Commissioners have now before them a proposal under which it may be possible to revert to the old arrangement of having two schools. What happened with regard to Clonmel was this. There was a Petition, not of the Catholic priest and people, for no priest signed it, but of the Mayor and other persons, and its prayer exactly tallied with the course resolved upon by the Board.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—INTIMIDATION AT DROMORE, CO. CLARE.

Captain M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been drawn to the fact of notices, of which the following is an extract, having been lately posted in the neighbourhood of Dromore, County Clare—

> "Now for the sake of liberty, country, and nationality, we call upon you to avoid all dealings with that mongrel and rotten sloggard, lame Tommy Crowe, of Dromore, let no one buy or sell with him, let no one work for him in any way, the man that does shall meet a sudden and untimely death; this is sworn by Him that Rules above.
>
> "By order of the Committee,
> "C. Moonlight;"

whether three-fourths of Mr. Crowe's labourers, on the appearance of this notice, at once left their employment; and, whether the Irish Executive are unable to cope with tyranny of this description?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Notices containing the sentence quoted were found to have been posted in the locality in which Mr. Crowe resides; and several of his labourers have left his employment, alleging the notice as the reason for doing so. The police at once took steps to trace the printer or publisher of the notice, which so far have not been successful. They also made arrangements for Mr. Crowe's personal protection, with which he has pronounced himself satisfied. The Government would have readily supported these men in resistance to this intimidation should they have resolved upon that course; but we have no power to compel them to resume work, or to take any steps in cases of the kind beyond those which I have mentioned.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I will ask the right hon. Gentleman whether this configurated notice was not put up until a number of labourers had actually left this gentleman's employment?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I am not aware of that.

IRELAND—ANTI-HOME RULE PETITIONS.

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with respect to the charge of procuring by intimidation signatures to Anti-Home Rule petitions in Ireland, Whether the police have inquired into the foundation of the statement in *The Drogheda Independent* of the 13th inst., that in different parts of Meath and Louth, and in the neighbourhoods of Duleek and Bohermeen, the labouring men on the different estates are compelled to sign Anti-Home Rule Petitions, under threats of disemployment and in fear of starvation; and, whether inquiry has been made, as to a resolution adopted by the Keles Branch of the National League, declaring—

> "That we condemn as heartless and tyrannical the action of those magnates who are coercing their labourers and servants to sign an Anti-Home Rule Memorial, in the hope that they will thereby impose on Mr. Gladstone and his Government?"

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The police have made inquiries, and they report that no intimidation is being practised to procure signatures to anti-Home Rule Petitions, as is alleged in the newspaper statement and resolution referred to in the Question.

EGYPT—THE EGYPTIAN EXILES.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, in view of the facts that two Egyptian exiles in Ceylon pleaded guilty of a charge which involved the confiscation of their property, by the advice of Her Majesty's Representative in Egypt, on the distinct assurance that they should receive pensions adequate for their requirements during their exile, and that the Governor of Ceylon reported in a despatch to the Colonial Secretary, which was laid before the last Parliament, that their pensions are not adequate, Her Majesty's Government will see that they are increased; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will use their good offices with the Egyptian Government to bring the exile of these gentlemen from their native country to a speedy close?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): Her Majesty's Government are not aware that the Egyptian exiles received any such assurance as stated in my hon. Friend's Question. The Papers presented to Parliament show the contrary to be the case—see Egypt, No. 8, 1883, page 3. In consequence of the representations received from the Governor of Ceylon, Her Majesty's Acting Agent at Cairo was instructed in September last to recommend to the Egyptian Government an increase of the allowances to the exiles, so as to put each of them in receipt of £435 a-year, except Arabi Pasha, who receives £600 a-year, and who has refused to share his extra allowance with his companions. Sir Evelyn Baring's attention has recently been called to the matter, and it is intended to desire him officially to again communicate with the Egyptian Government on the subject. Considering the causes which led to the deportation of these exiles, and the results which might follow their return to Egypt, Her Majesty's Government can hold out no hope that they will use their good offices in the way suggested.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS AND CLERKS.

Mr. MORGAN HOWARD (Camberwell, Dulwich) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether any decision has yet been arrived at with respect to the claims of the Civil Service writers and clerks; and, if not, when such decision is likely to take place?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): I hope very shortly to be in a position to announce the decision on the questions raised by the lower division clerks and the writers employed in the Government Departments.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (SCOTLAND)—POLLING PLACES—LEGISLATION.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether he intends to bring in a Bill dealing with the question of the cost of Polling Places in Scotland?

Sir HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton) asked, if the right hon. and learned Gentleman would also inform the House whether the Return which his Predecessor had promised would shortly be in the hands of hon. Members?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am not in a position to answer that Question at the moment. The Returning Officers' Bill is in course of preparation; but we have had to communicate in Scotland with persons who are concerned in the administration of the law there, with a view to ascertaining what minimum charges can be inserted in the Schedule of the Bill.

THE CROFTERS BILL—TRAMWAYS (SCOTLAND).

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Government will consent to the facilities for the formation and working of tramways, given by "The Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1883," being extended to those parts of Scotland included in the Crofters Bill of the Government now before Parliament?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.) (who replied) said: The question of extending the provisions of the Tramways Act to the Highlands of Scotland has not been considered, because the Government have been doing what is regarded as much more material—largely improving the steamer communication amongst the Islands and on the coasts of the Highlands with very great and immediate advantage.

GREENWICH AGE PENSIONS.

SIR JOHN GORST (Chatham) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether the Admiralty will withdraw the regulation by which the amount of Greenwich Pension is limited, to such amount as raises the total received, as pension, to 2*s.* 6*d.* per diem?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. R. W. DUFF) (Banffshire) (who replied) said: The Admiralty have already withdrawn the limit as to 2*s.* 6*d.* in such cases as they deem fit.

SIR JOHN GORST asked, how much the change would cost?

MR. R. W. DUFF: It will cost the Charity about £500 a-year.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—BOGUS OUTRAGE AT CASTLECAULFIELD, CO. TYRONE — CASE OF ROBERT CUDDY.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Was it reported to the police, that, on the night of 21st December last, a man disguised and with his face blackened visited the houses of John Armstrong, Jonathan Colbert, Thomas Armstrong, Samuel Somerville, John Macwhinny, and William M'Kenna, near Castlecaulfield, county Tyrone; is it the fact that the man had a book with him, from which he pretended to read, and in which he seemed to make entries; that he asked who lived in each house, and for whom he had voted at the late election; said he was from Dublin and had other boys with him; that he told them to pay no rent, or, if they did, they would not have long to live; whether, when he came to the house of M'Kenna, he said, "All right, you are a Nationalist," and, pointing to a schoolhouse, which had been an Orange Lodge, said, "That must be removed;" was he hunted down and captured by two men named Bunnes and Armstrong, and did it transpire that he was an Orangeman named Robert Cuddy, junior; is it true that Cuddy and his father were brought by the police before a local justice, Colonel Burgess, and discharged without a prosecution; and, was the case reported to the resident magistrate, and have any steps been taken to punish the author of this outrage; and, if not, who is responsible?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): In connection with this case I have received from Colonel Burgess a repudiation of his having acted with any spirit of partizanship in the matter. I have also received from the Inspector General a Report which puts the affair in a rather serious light; and I have accordingly laid the papers before the Attorney General for his decision as to whether a prosecution should be instituted against Robert Cuddy, jun. I shall then consider what further action the circumstances of the case call for.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to submit the action of Colonel Burgess to the Lord Chancellor?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I have no doubt that what Colonel Burgess did will at the same time come within the purview of the inquiry.

TRANSFER OF LAND AND HOUSE PROPERTY—LEGISLATION.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government, during the present Session, to introduce a Bill for the purpose of cheapening the transfer of land and house property?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian) in reply, said, that the question was receiving the full consideration of his noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor, but it was impossible to give an answer in regard to it at present. The Question was not so simple as it looked, or as one unacquainted with the subject might imagine, as it involved rather a large consideration of the manner in which land under entail or settlement is dealt with.

PROVISION FOR THE ROYAL FAMILY.

MR. HOWARD SPENSLEY (Finsbury, Central) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in accordance with the assurance given in the last Parliament, he contemplates the appointment of a Committee to consider the question of grants of money to the Royal Family?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian):

It is quite accurate that an intention was expressed in the course of last Session by the Government then in Office, consisting in great part of Members of the present Government, to move for the appointment of a Committee to consider the question of grants of money to the Royal Family, and that intention is still retained. But with regard to the precise time for asking the House to appoint that Committee, we are doubtful whether the present time would be convenient when questions of great and absorbing interest and difficulty are in immediate prospect. I therefore cannot say at what specific moment it may be considered convenient to submit the proposal to the House.

PROCEDURE — UNOPPOSED RETURNS.

MR. BERESFORD HOPE (Cambridge University): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Under what circumstances the Return No. 11 (Universities Oxford and Cambridge) moved for by the hon. Member for Bermondsey (Mr. Thorold Rogers) has been assented to by the Home Office as an unopposed Return? The Return itself is of a very comprehensive and inquisitorial character; it has only appeared on the Paper to-day; and no intimation that the hon. Member intended to move for it was previously given to the Representatives of either Oxford or Cambridge University.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I am not quite sure that the term "inquisitorial," which has been used by the right hon. Gentleman, is strictly regular; but however that may be, I am very happy to tell the right hon. Gentleman all I can with reference to the Return. The application for this Return was made by my hon. Friend below the Gangway some weeks ago, and when he made it I placed myself in communication with the Vice Chancellors of the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The communications lasted for some time, and ultimately the character of the Return was considerably modified. After I had obtained the concurrence of the two Vice Chancellors, I was not aware that it was my duty to do more than consent to the Return as an unopposed Return. If I had known that it was the custom to consult the Members for the two Universities as well as the officers of the Universities, I would have been happy to do so; but I have no recollection of any previous occasion in which that was thought necessary. In my opinion, the Return itself will be an extremely useful one.

MR. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey): As my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has stated, I asked for the Return some time ago, and I stated certain facts in connection with it. I was unaware that it was necessary to consult the Representatives of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, or I certainly should have done so, if only as a matter of common courtesy. I know that the form of the Return was submitted to the Vice Chancellors of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and that they made some emendations in it; and, under those circumstances, I moved for the Return as an unopposed Return at five minutes past 4 to-day. All I can say is, that I asked you, Sir, when I should make the Motion, and you were good enough to say that it ought to be made after the Private Business. As a dutiful Member of the House I obeyed your ruling.

MR. RAIKES (Cambridge University): As to the form of this Return I will say nothing; but I will ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, Whether his attention has been called to the serious interference with the privileges of the House that may arise from the course pursued in the present case, if an hon. Member is allowed to put down a Notice one day of his intention to move for a Return, and is then, on the next Parliamentary day, to move for it as an unopposed Return, with the consent of the Department concerned? I must say that in such a case the jurisdiction of the House is altogether ousted, and the judgment of the House is precluded from being taken. I, therefore, ask my right hon. Friend whether he will not lay it down, on behalf of the Government, as a general principle, that in granting unopposed Returns, the Home Office will stipulate that a certain time must elapse, so that hon. Members who may object to them may have an opportunity of expressing their opinion?

MR. CHILDERS: I think the suggestion of my right hon. Friend is not an unfair one, in the case of a complicated Return like the present one;

but I do not think it would be necessary, as a rule, to insist on its adoption in all cases. Of course, there are many simple Returns which it may be convenient to move for at once. I may add that, although I consented to this Return, I did not know that it was to be moved for to-day.

PUBLIC BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid-Lothian): I wish to say, with regard to the course of Business, that if the Committee on the Crofters Bill should not be closed this evening we shall proceed with it on Thursday. But if, as I hope is possible, it should be closed this evening, we should propose to proceed with Supply as the first Order on Thursday; and as the Report on the Crofters Bill would probably not take much time we should leave off Supply at an early hour to take that Report, and after that redeem the pledge we have given on the Sunday Closing Bill. On a former evening I said that I would give to-day the terms of the Motion with regard to Ireland. They will be for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the provisions for the future government of Ireland. That will be on the 8th. On the 12th, so far as depends on the Government, I will give further information, if I can, as to the course of Business; but on that day my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to produce the Budget; and on the 15th I shall propose to ask leave to bring in a Bill to make amended provision for the sale and purchase of land in Ireland.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 118.] COMMITTEE.

Mr. M'LAREN (Stafford), in rising to move—

> "That it be an Instruction to the said Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to other parts of Scotland,"

said, he was sure every Member interested in this Bill would agree with him in regretting that the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) would no longer have the official conduct of the measure. Every Member in that House knew that the right hon. Gentleman took a sincere and a great interest in the crofters; and he was sure there was no Member of the Government who could have striven more conscientiously to make the Bill a thorough-going and useful measure. Though they would no longer have the advantage of his assistance in the Government, they would hope to have his powerful assistance as an independent Member, and he trusted that Amendments which the right hon. Gentleman could not have supported as Secretary for Scotland, he might be able to support as a private Member. The Bill was limited to five counties named in the Bill, and several Members had given Notice of Amendments to extend that provision. He understood that unless the Committee had an Instruction to extend the provision of the Bill it would not be competent for any hon. Member to move any such Amendment in Committee. The only object of this Instruction was that the Committee should have power to entertain these Amendments and to judge them on their merits. He should like to have a definite ruling from the Chair on this subject; and he therefore asked the Speaker whether it would be competent for the Committee to entertain any Amendment which would bring other counties within the scope of the measure unless some such Instruction as this was carried?

Mr. SPEAKER: On looking at the Bill, I am clearly of opinion that an Instruction of the nature proposed to be moved for by the hon. Member would be distinctly necessary to empower the Committee to do what otherwise they would not be competent to do.

Mr. M'LAREN said, that being the case, he hoped that the Government, on the understanding that this Instruction was moved only for the purpose of admitting certain Amendments for discussion, would be able to accede to his Motion. He did not ask the Government to commit themselves to any particular Amendment. He only asked them to give power to the Committee to take the Amendments into consideration. The Bill at present did not proceed on a logical principle. The House was not accustomed to entertain measures for altering the law with respect to particular counties. It had been of late attempted to pass Sunday Closing measures for Durham and Cornwall; but they had never been received with favour by the House. The principle which the House had always gone upon was not to pass measures for particular geographical districts, but to pass measures relating to special conditions of society wherever these conditions might exist; and he asked the House to consider whether it would not be a more logical application of this principle of legislation to say that this Bill should apply to all those districts in Scotland where crofting conditions existed. If this were done, it would render the Bill a much more useful, more satisfactory, and more complete measure. Aberdeen and Perthshire formed as important a part of the Highlands as Inverness, and why should they be excluded from the benefits of the Bill? Why was an unfortunate farmer in one district to be excluded from advantages which a farmer in another was allowed to enjoy? If it was said that the Commissioners only visited certain counties, and only reported on certain counties, then he thought that would be taking advantage of a technicality which would be unworthy of Her Majesty's Government. The Commissioners had power to go into any district they chose, the scope of their Reference being the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. He thought the more the Government would consider this point the more they would see the justice and the expediency of allowing the Committee to be unhampered when deciding on the details of the Bill. The tenure this Bill proposed to establish was beneficial; but some persons doubted whether crofters could really live on their holdings without the aid of some other occupation, like fishing. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcudbrightshire had an Amendment which would deal with the fishery question, and it would be good to give to all crofters, who could earn some money by fishing, the privileges of this Bill. Now, in some of the counties to which he had alluded, particularly in Bute, there was every opportunity for allowing a crofter to hold a little land, and also to do a little fishing; and if the whole question was to have a fair trial the House ought, as far as possible, to extend the principle to districts in which it was most probable that the crofting system would succeed. The crofters that would be benefited under this Bill would form a very small class indeed; and it was a very dangerous and invidious thing to create, as this Bill did, a small peasant aristocracy, having privileges that were withheld from all others of their class throughout Scotland —an aristocracy which, by reason of the smallness of their numbers and of the restrictions with which this Bill was hampered, would inevitably die out unless the Bill were extended. He humbly suggested that the only true statesmanlike principle on which the Bill could be carried out would be to say that anyone who could say "I fulfil the conditions of this Bill," might have a right to avail himself of its provisions. He hoped the Instruction would be accepted by the Government; and in Committee hon. Members who had already Notices of Amendments would be able to give ample reasons for asking that the provisions of the Bill should be extended.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the said Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to other parts of Scotland."—(*Mr. M'Laren.*)

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, he gathered from the hon. Gentleman's observations that his object was to get the Government to allow this Instruction to pass, practically without argument, for the purpose of allowing certain Amendments to be moved in Committee, which Mr. Speaker had ruled could not be moved without such an Instruction. He thought that would be a very inconvenient and very unsatisfactory course, because it would be practically pledging this House in Committee to consider a perfectly new matter; one which had never been suggested in debate before in this House, and which had never been discussed in any way throughout the country as a practical question. He thought he was justified in stating broadly and frankly that this idea of dealing with this question as a general question affecting all Scotland was one which had never been discussed by the community, and that there had never been any facts laid before this House, by Report or otherwise, to guide them in the matter. It was an entirely new idea, neither coming from the people in the other districts of Scotland themselves nor suggested by the Report of the Royal Commission. The sole ground for the Commissioners' inquiries, the sole matter with which the Commission after its inquiries dealt, was narrowed down to the consideration of the condition of certain places and districts in the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland, where it was alleged that in consequence of the conditions of the population in the crofter townships there was distress existing. The hon. Gentleman opposite had not suggested—and he would have been surprised if he or anyone who knew anything about Scotland had suggested it—that throughout the districts of Scotland, not embraced in this Bill, there was distress among any population similar to that in the West Highlands and Islands which should call in any way for the intervention of Parliament; and if there was no ground for considering the condition of the people in the West Highlands and Islands as different from that of the people of a similar class in life in other parts of Scotland, then there was no call for proceeding to legislation on the subject at all. He ventured to submit that the only ground for this legislation was that there had been something anomalous in the history of the West Highlands and Islands which led to the distress that now called for Parliamentary interference; and it would need a strong case in a Bill brought in expressly to meet and to carry out a Report of the Royal Commission to justify Parliament in not limiting itself to the somewhat limited, confined, and peculiar areas to which the inquiries of the Commission had been limited, and to extend it practically to the whole of Scotland. He thought the House would demand to know whether, when such proposal was made, there was any ground in the Report or the evidence of the Royal Commission to show that there were other parts of Scotland which were practically in the same position as the West Highlands and Islands? The proposal was a very extraordinary one to come from people who had been parties to the issuing of a Royal Commission, and to the confining of that Commission, to the districts with which it dealt. He presumed they had not learned anything since the Commission was issued which would lead them to the conclusion that they had then been ill-informed as to the general state of Scotland, and that they should have asked for an inquiry with reference to the whole of Scotland. But if they did now think that this matter could not be dealt with finally without dealing with it on the footing that the whole of Scotland should be included, then the proper course would be to move for another inquiry. Instead of that, however, they were asked, on the *ipse dixit* of the hon. Member for Stafford and some other Members, to proceed on the footing that although there had been no inquiry made or suggested into the state of matters in the rest of Scotland they should proceed now to extend the scope of the operation of the Bill, solely and only because the hon. Member and certain other Gentlemen said that they believed there was other places in which the general historical observations, it might be, or the general features of the country and population resembled to some extent those in the West Highlands and Islands. That would be a very extraordinary instruction to give to the Committee. They were at present dealing with a Bill based on the idea of carrying out the Report of the Royal Commissions. But he was not, as a matter of fact, surprised that some were anxious to go outside the scope of the Bill; because, in his own judgment, the Government had taken an extraordinary course in selecting one isolated item in the Report of the Royal Commission, and proposing to carry it out in one way, and now by an Amendment they had on the Paper proposing to carry it out in an entirely different way. The recommendations and opinions of the Commissioners as to what was required to meet the distress in the Highlands were absolutely ignored by the Government; and not only so, but the main recommendations upon which the Commission declared any legislation that followed would have any real and permanent beneficial effect upon the population of the Highlands had also been ignored down to the present time. It was suggested in the Motion that the Bill should apply in any part of Scotland where it could be ascertained that similar circumstances prevailed to those in the Highlands and Islands. How were these facts to be ascertained? There was only one way, and that was to appoint somebody, after the Bill was passed, to ascertain to what areas of the country it should apply. That would be a strange proceeding. They had always been led to expect in all land legislation that they were reaching a definite point and dealing with exceptional cases; yet whenever one particular case was disposed of—in this instance even before the particular case was disposed of—they discovered that, so far from being exceptional, it was after all general. In this case they had a Motion proposing that all idea of dealing with an exceptional case was out of the question, and that the legislation begun as dealing with an exceptional condition of things was to be extended until it absorbed the whole circuit of the three Kingdoms. In a former debate the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) said that the Bill ought to be extended to the East of Scotland. He wanted to know from Her Majesty's Government how they were going to proceed with this case. Did they mean to stick by the Bill for dealing with the West Highlands and Islands, or not? He was sure a great many Members would not have allowed the second reading to pass without a division if it had been thought a movement was to be made in Committee to turn it into a Bill having general application. The hon. Member for Stafford said he thought there would be great danger in establishing a small privileged aristocracy in the Highlands and Islands; but was there such a danger in the case of Islands? If that was to be the effect of the Bill, there might be great danger in it. Legislation of this kind was already complete in Ireland. Did the hon. Member consider that great injury had been done in Ireland by establishing there a privileged aristocracy who could turn out their landlords at any time, but who could never be turned out themselves?

Mr. M'LAREN: What I suggested was that it was dangerous to establish a limited peasant aristocracy in certain limited areas in Scotland. My opinion is that all the persons of that class who fulfilled certain statutory conditions should have the benefit of the legislation just as they had in Ireland.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD, resuming, said, that he so understood the hon. Gentleman, and that raised the difficulty in his mind. It was now said that the inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands were not in an exceptional position, and it was proposed by the Bill to place them in one. He differed from that view, and believed that those inhabitants were, to some extent, in an exceptional position. If he had not believed that, he would not have allowed the second reading of the Bill without a division. It was only because the Report of the Royal Commission brought out clearly the distinction to be drawn between these people and the people of other parts of Scotland that legislation was thought desirable and was recommended. The right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill said that it was one dealing with an exceptional case, and that he did certain things because there was historic proof of the necessity, and refused to do other things because there was no such proof. Were they now to enter upon a vast scheme for dealing with the whole of Scotland? They ought to have a distinct statement from the Government in order that they might know what course to take. Surely it would not be reasonable or right that the scope of the Bill should be extended by a side-wind in the way recommended by the hon. Member.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.) said, he could only interpret the Motion of the hon. Member for Stafford as the expression of a desire that it ought to be in the power of the Committee to extend the Bill to places other than the Highlands and Islands of Scotland; not places other than the enumerated counties, but to places other than the Highlands and Islands. The Bill, as the title declared, was "a Bill to amend the Law relating to the Tenure of Land by Crofters in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland;" and he would ask the Speaker's ruling, for the information of the House, as to whether it would not be competent under that title, and without any such Instruction as was proposed by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Stafford, for any hon. Member to say, when Clause 16 was reached—"Here is a place which falls within the category of Highlands and Islands," and to move the addition to that place without any formal

Motion? He believed it would be competent; and, therefore, he could only interpret the Motion as wishing to extend the Bill to parts of Scotland other than the Highlands and Islands. In a Bill with such a title, brought in upon the Report of a Commission directed to inquire into the condition of the crofters and cottars of the Highlands and Islands, it would not be right to go further, and the Government would strongly resist any proposal to do so.

MR. SPEAKER: The question asked me by the hon. Member for Stafford was whether I should think an Instruction was necessary if the scope of a Bill, the title of which implied that it was limited to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, were proposed to be extended to the whole of Scotland? I said I had no doubt that, in that case, an Instruction would be necessary. I do not think, however, that it would be necessary for the House to give an Instruction to empower the Committee to include adjoining Highland counties in the Bill.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) said, that Aberdeensbire had a larger interest in this Bill than any other county in Scotland. It had nearly 12,000 agricultural holdings, or one-sixth part of the agricultural holdings of Scotland, and a larger number of holdings of the sizes enumerated in the Schedule of the Bill than any other county. Accepting, however, the Speaker's ruling, he hoped he and his hon. Friend (Dr. Farquharson) would be able to show the Committee that there were good reasons for including Aberdeenshire in the Bill.

SIR DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.) said, he had intended to second the Motion; but after the statement of the Lord Advocate he would ask the hon. Member for Stafford to withdraw it. In Committee they would be able to discuss whether neighbouring counties and islands, such as Arran, should be included in the scope of the measure.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) said, he could not agree with the request of the hon. Member. On the contrary, he thought the House should express an opinion on this subject. Although he apprehended that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the University of Edinburgh (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) did not know much about the feelings of the crofters, yet other Members had definite information on the subject; and he could assure the House that there was a strong desire on the part of the crofter farmers throughout Scotland to have the provisions of the Bill extended to the whole of that country. The claims which the crofters had in other parts of Scotland were no less strong than in the Highlands. The crofters in the Lowlands had done much more to improve their holdings than the crofters in the Western Islands and Highlands. Large tracts of land had been reclaimed entirely at the expense and with the labour of the Lowland crofters, who now occupied it. Many of these crofters had settled on a piece of moorland which they had obtained at a nominal rent, but still a higher rent than it brought in previously. After occupying that piece of land for, probably, a term of 19 years, the rent was raised to the actual value, and in many cases more than the value, of the holdings, the increase of rent being due to the improvements carried out by the tenants. That was a case which demanded the serious and earnest consideration of the House. Considering the fall in agricultural produce in the last two or three years, the condition of these crofters was very pitiable indeed. The tenants agreed, under pressure of necessity, to pay exorbitant rents for their holdings—rents which, even with the greatest industry, and with prices much higher than they were at present, they were barely able to pay. But now that the prices of agricultural produce had fallen so much they were actually being deprived of what little they had saved. The condition of many parts of Scotland was, therefore, very serious indeed. He appealed to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen to look back to the legislation of the last few years, and ask themselves whether the great trouble and difficulty which had arisen in Ireland, and also in the Western Highlands of Scotland, was not because Parliament had not dealt soon enough with the question of the land? As he had heard it well expressed, Parliament had always refused to do anything so long as people were quiet. It was not until the people of Ireland had created some disturbance that Parliament listened to their demands; and now, again, it was not until the crofters of Scotland had become troublesome that their demands were, to some extent, being acceded to. But the urgency for dealing with smaller tenants throughout the other parts of Scotland was not less great than the case of the Western Highlands. He, therefore, asked the House, as earnestly as he possibly could, to deal with this question while there was time, and before more serious difficulty arose? Anyone who considered the subject required little further evidence. Within the past two or three years the prices of agricultural produce had fallen by more than the amount of the rent. The consequence was that if a tenant now paid his rent he had to pay it out of his capital. If some steps were immediately taken to secure to the tenant a fair rent and security of tenure, he thought it would stimulate the tenants throughout Scotland very much to renewed exertions, and perhaps enable them to make the rent out of the land even in the face of all the difficulties under which they now laboured. For these reasons, he hoped the House would consent to the Instruction moved by the hon. Member for Stafford. He thought it would be a wise and prudent measure to extend the provisions of this Bill to the whole of Scotland. He assured the House that there was the greatest possible necessity and urgency for it, and that the farmers of Scotland really expected some practical measure from this Parliament. That was the hope held out to them during the last General Election; and he was sure that extreme disappointment would be felt if the proposal of the hon. Member for Stafford was not adopted by the House. He submitted that it was the duty of every hon. Gentleman in the House representing a Scotch agricultural constituency to support the Motion.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll) said, he would appeal to the hon. Member for Stafford not to press his Motion. He was as anxious as anyone that all persons who could reasonably be brought within the scope of the measure should derive the benefit of this legislation. He was afraid, however, that the hon. Member, and those who supported him, were asking the House to take on board a small boat more passengers than it was capable of carrying, and there was a danger of the craft being swamped. If the Motion were adopted, it was very likely that, instead of a certain amount of relief being granted to the crofters of the Islands and Highlands of Scotland, between the two stools they would fall to the ground and get nothing. The proposed Instruction would so enlarge the scope of the measure that it would be impossible to pass the Bill with ease and rapidity.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeen, W.) said, he thought the Government might have accepted this Motion, deferring the discussion of its scope until they reached Committee. There was a strong and earnest desire on the part of many agriculturists in different parts of Scotland to be included in the Bill. His own constituency included a very large number of small holders under exactly the same conditions as the crofters in the West of Scotland, and they were all naturally very desirous to come within the scope of the Bill. The House had been told that there was practically no distress in other parts of Scotland. He begged emphatically to contradict that statement, because everyone knew perfectly well that there did exist distress of a very deep and serious character. That distress had been quietly borne. Those who endured it were an industrious and long-suffering people, carrying out their obligations willingly and manfully, and paying their rents up to the very last moment. Surely, then, the provisions of the Bill should be extended to them. At any rate, he hoped the discussions which might take place later on would result in placing Aberdeenshire within the scope of the Bill.

Mr. A. R. D. ELLIOT (Roxburgh), while admitting that distress prevailed amongst the agricultural population of Scotland generally, still he felt bound to say he never saw a Bill which was less suited to mitigate or improve the condition of the agricultural classes in what he might call the farming parts of Scotland. Liberals had for years been urging the necessity of what had been called free trade in land, and that was what he believed they were determined in a great measure to stick to. There was this great difference between the land with which the Bill dealt and that with which English Members and Scottish Members were familiar—within the more flourishing parts of Scotland, in these parts the dealing with land was a trade. People went into it in a business way, and made bargains. Then there was the other state of things with which they became very familiar in dealing with Ireland—the case of squatters, who were not on the land by virtue of any bargain at all, but whose ancestors had been there time out of mind—mere squatters on the land, hardly to be dignified with the name of farmers. He was certain that persons of that sort would not, in his part of Scotland, be called farmers. This Bill was intended to deal with the conditions of a limited population—about 40,000—in the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland. This legislation was accordingly proposed simply to mitigate the distress and the difficulties under which those 40,000 families were labouring. To propose that it would be politic, or useful, or beneficial, in any degree whatever, to extend to the whole of Scotland certain provisions intended to meet the difficulties of the 40,000 was to make a very grave mistake. He protested against anything of the kind being done, and was very glad the Lord Advocate had shown his determination not to apply the provisions of a Bill which they hoped would do good, where they could be properly applied, to cases which could never have entered into the calculations of those who had advocated the measure.

MR. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox), in supporting the Motion, said, he could point to a county in the South of Scotland—Wigtownshire, to which the Bill might be appropriately extended —where there were crofters in precisely the same condition as those described by the hon. Member for Forfarshire. In that county there were three groups of crofters, one of which was considered so important that, some years ago, *The Scotsman* sent down a special commission to inquire into their condition. These people had improved their land, and done their best with it; yet they were in a very destitute condition indeed.

Question put.

The House *divided* :—Ayes 91; Noes 287: Majority 196.—(Div. List, No. 47.)

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.), in rising to move—

"That no Bill will suffice to amend the tenure of land in the Highlands and Islands which does not afford some pecuniary assistance towards that object in certain parts of the Country,"

said, that he was one of the last men in the House to make great demands upon the Treasury, or to ask the Government to be extravagant; but this was a peculiar case. It was his own belief, and that of nearly all who knew the country, that the condition of the inhabitants of the more impoverished parts of Scotland could not really be improved without the expenditure of money. That was the reason why he, a purist in financial matters, ventured to propose this Motion. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer was appalled at the proposals which were made in connection with this Bill, it showed that the right hon. Gentleman was a very young and innocent Chancellor of the Exchequer; because there was really no need to be appalled at the very moderate demands which were made on behalf of the crofters, especially when they considered what had been done for Ireland. No later than the end of last Session a sum of £5,000,000 was voted by Parliament to improve the condition of the Irish land tenants; and he contended that this was a case in which it was right and proper that the Government should give, in some shape, pecuniary assistance. He was glad to know that the Government proposed to give an advance of money towards the improvement of the fishing industry on the West Coast of Scotland; but he could not help feeling that if the Government limited these advances to the fishing industry, they were not fulfilling the objects of the Bill. The main object of the Bill was to improve the tenure of land in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland; and he hoped the Government were prepared to do something to promote that object by means of pecuniary assistance. It was the evictor's cry to drive the crofter to the sea; and the Bill would play into the evictor's hand, by making loans to fishermen, and not to crofters, for the improvement of their farms. The poverty of the people proposed to be benefited by the Bill was notorious. They were not small farmers, but a congested, impoverished, squeezed-out race. He did not advocate emigration; but he was convinced that the object of the Bill could never be effected without a considerable amount of migration. If they wanted to benefit these people, they must do something to migrate them to those parts of Scotland from which their ancestors were expelled; and, for that purpose, it was absolutely necessary that some pecuniary assistance should be given to them. He also asked that the Government would consent to make an advance of money to the Highland landlords, on terms at least as favourable as those on which they had advanced money to the Irish landlords—namely, at 3¼ per cent. He believed, if sufficient encouragement was given to the landlords in the way of advances, that many of them would avail themselves of these advances to settle the crofters on the land under more improved conditions than those they now occupied. He could not understand the reason of this excessive stinginess on the part of the Government. They spent millions of money on unnecessary expeditions to foreign countries, and yet they grudged a few thousands for the benefit of their people at home. If the people only happened to be black, the Government did not care how much money they expended upon them, as in the case of the Bechuanas they had voted last year £100,000 to prevent their eviction by the Boers, and this year £100,000 was again on the Estimates for the same purpose. The Bechuanas numbered about 30,000 people, and the people in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland numbered something like 300,000; yet the Government refused to grant them any money which would add to their prosperity. He thought the crofters were worth quite as much as the Bechuanas. He could not understand why the Government should pour out so much money on these distant objects, and refuse to give any money to keep alive the magnificent race of people in the Highlands and Islands. At the present moment Scotland, owing to the large tax on whisky, was contributing to the national Exchequer £1,800,000 a-year more taxation than was its fair share; and he only asked that something should be returned to Scotland in this special and necessary case, in order to preserve these people in the Highlands and Islands. Unless something was done in the direction he had indicated, he believed the Bill would really be impracticable. Unless the Government were prepared to make some further concession, the Bill was almost an imposture.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "no Bill will suffice to amend the tenure of land in the Highlands and Islands which does not afford some pecuniary assistance towards that object in certain parts of the Country,"—*(Sir George Campbell,)*

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he thought there could be little doubt that the more this Bill was examined and discussed the less favourable was the opinion entertained regarding it. He did not think that night's discussion, or that on a former occasion, was calculated to satisfy any one section of the House. They had heard a great deal against the Bill from various quarters, notably from the other side; and now they had an Amendment asking the Government to grant more pecuniary assistance to the crofter populations. He thought that, unless they did give more pecuniary assistance in various ways, this Bill, although it had high-sounding phrases, such as fixity of tenure and fair rents—terms which had hitherto been unknown on the Scottish Statute Book—would do little to satisfy the people interested in it. They had had, practically, a great deal of fixity of tenure for many years, and it was not the case that Highland landlords had wantonly evicted tenants; and when he moved for certain Returns the other day, and which were not granted, owing to the time it would take to collect them, he did so, believing that they would throw light on the subject, and would discover that the leniency and the good treatment evinced by Scottish landlords generally, were, on the whole, of the most satisfactory description, and reflected most favourably on those in the more northerly Highlands and Islands, who certainly had not too much of this world's wealth in their pockets. Now, in his opinion, the only satisfactory conclusion was to afford some aid towards the development of those natural resources which they found on the Western

Coast of Scotland, and the most important of these was the fishing industry. He was aware that the late Secretary for Scotland had inserted clauses, giving the Fishery Board certain powers in order to spend money on those populations, and enable them to equip vessels; but the Bill entirely ignored that; and, remembering how very strong were the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the point, he thought it was strange that those recommendations had been left out, and this pecuniary assistance refused. Again, he found there was nothing in the way of assisting these populations to better harbours. That, no doubt, was a wider question. The Royal Commission had also laid great stress on the necessity for increased postal and telegraphic communication, without which the people in the Western Highlands found it impossible to get information regarding the markets in good time. He thought the Government might spend some money in endeavouring to give better internal communication, both as to railway and postal and telegraphic communication. In that way thousands and tens of thousands of tons of fish might be brought to a given point, and be upon the Southern markets in the course of a very few hours. He believed that, if a project which he would have liked to bring before the House, but which had been ruled by Mr. Speaker not to be in Order, could have been brought forward and inserted in the Bill it would have been the making of thousands of industrious people who, not having enough land to cultivate profitably, would have fished to a much larger extent than at present; and would have had the very best market in which to dispose of their produce. On the East Coast large sums had been given, and had led to great prosperity among the fishing population. On the West Coast they had had very little assistance. On the East Coast there was an enormous fishing population, 27,000 men being employed in the industry, while there were comparatively few on the West. On the East Coast they had boats and gear belonging to fishermen amounting in value to £1,111,000. On the West Coast, where they had no means of communication, and were stinted for want of money in developing the natural resources, they had only £118,600 worth of boats, gear, and tackle. They had 2,000 miles of coast on the West, and it was admitted that the fisheries on the West were practically undeveloped. So important, then, would it be for the crofting and seafaring population there to have the assistance now asked. It would help them to eke out their livelihood by gaining a bonus in fishing. At present they went West, East, North, and South to the fishing. They need not go East, North, and South if they had facilities given them at home. Unless they gave such facilities, what would be the value to them of this Bill—a Bill which gave them a few acres without money to stock them, and with only the assurance that they would have them for 15 years at a fair rent, if they paid that rent? What was wanted was to give them profitable employment, and to assist that employment in the best possible way. The land was naturally poor, but the sea was rich. They required better harbours, especially in the Lews, and better communication between the Islands and the mainland; and if the House would assent to this Motion, they would at once see the great advantages of promoting works of that kind. The Railway Companies themselves would find it a profitable thing to carry the fish over their lines, and the whole population would be benefited by increased supplies of fish. He hoped that the House would give a favourable answer to the Motion of the hon. Member, and that it would also consider the further suggestions he had ventured to submit.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt)(Derby) said, he hoped they might be allowed to go on with the Bill, and that the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy would not press a Motion to a division, which, if carried, would be fatal to the Bill. ["No, no!"] But yes. If the Motion was carried the Bill could not go on that night, nor any other night, unless the Government proposed to introduce money clauses into the Bill. He asked, whether the hon. Gentleman who desired to see this Bill passed were prepared to take such a course? The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy was like a good many Free Traders; they believed in Free Trade for everything, except the particular one in which they were interested. The hon. Gentleman was an economist upon all subjects, except those which concerned the particular interests which touched himself. He asked his hon. Friend to consider what would be the result if every Member in the House made demands of this character upon the Government, and the Government were to yield to them all in turn? The hon. Member opposite (Mr. Mark Stewart) said money was to be given for the development of the resources of the country, which was poor in its soil, and to provide employment for the people—rather a large order, not confined in its principle to the West Coast of Scotland or the crofters. There might be something said on that subject in every part of the United Kingdom. Amongst the other objects they were asked to build harbours, give better communication, and to subsidize Railway Companies, for the purpose, as he understood, of their going into remote parts of the West Highlands. What would be the consequence to the taxpayer of this country of adopting principles of that description—of accepting the principles that they were to develop the resources of bad land, to find profitable employment for the people, to subsidize Railway Companies, and to improve communication, for the purpose of finding better markets for commodities of all descriptions? Those were the sort of proposals which would ruin the finances of the country, which made all economy impossible—proposals made at a time when the expenditure was increasing without limit. If the House were to accept a general principle of that character, there was no hope for the finances, or the solvency of the country at all. It was perfectly impossible to apply this principle to one part of the country, and refuse it to another. He knew that the late Lord Advocate, and he supposed other Scottish Members, would like to see money spent in Scotland. When the Royal Commission was appointed—for which he was responsible—he had no idea they were to undertake the duty of financial recommendation. If he had had such an idea—although he was not Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time, but Home Secretary—he would have taken very good care, as they generally did on Royal Commissions, to put somebody to look after the interests of the taxpayers of the Kingdom. What happened? That Commission, which consisted of very able and very patriotic Scotsmen, who differed upon every other subject, agreed to make unlimited demands upon the English Exchequer. That was the one point on which they were unanimous, and having once begun that operation, they were most bountiful. Their imagination was freed of all restraint, as the English Exchequer was to pay. He thought the Commission which recommended that great trunk lines should be made at the expense of the country into most of the lochs on the West Coast——

Mr. BUCHANAN reminded the right hon. Gentleman that Scotland contributed to the Exchequer as well as England.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, that was true; but he would ask the House to consider what would be the proportion of each £1 which the English taxpayer would pay, and what would be the proportion which the Scotch taxpayer would pay? He was bound to consider those matters, and to tell the House that there was not the money to do this; and that to adopt a Motion of this kind was not a reasonable proposal. It was really playing at the Business of the House. It would not be doing what was practicable, because there were no means to carry out proposals of this character. Therefore, he most sincerely hoped his hon. Friend would not press a Motion of that character, which would only have the effect of standing in the way of a measure which they all sincerely desired, and with which he trusted the House would now allow them to proceed.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) said, the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken always acted up to the top of any part which might happen to be entrusted to him. Last year he was Home Secretary, when he had charge of the Crofters Bill; now he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and it appeared that this country was to be bankrupt, and we would be unable to meet our engagements if the smallest amount of public money was expended on behalf of those unfortunate people for whose benefit they were going to upset the existing condition of things.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I made no proposals about money last year. [The Lord Advocate: Hear, hear!]

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Do I understand the Lord Advocate assents to that interpretation?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): The only proposal was to lend on the security of the land.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Was there a proposal in this Bill to lend on the security of the land? He did not know what were the views of the hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment; but he believed the hon. Gentleman's views might be largely met if the Government consented to lend on the security of the land. That was the species of proposal which the hon. Gentleman had in view, and which the hon. Gentleman near him advocated.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Subsidizing Railway Companies.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: How was it that any money proposals were now to have such tragic consequences when the right hon. Gentleman was a Member of the Government which proposed them only last year?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said, the right hon. Gentleman had omitted to notice the fact that £4,000,000 had been added to the expenditure since then.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, he understood that the right hon. Gentleman assented to the proposal that money ought to be given; but as a good deal of money had been spent by the Government lately the crofters must wait. That was not the view advocated in his speech, nor was it a view which would find much favour with the starving population in the West Highlands. The right hon. Gentleman appealed to his Friends not to imperil what he called the success of the Bill by voting for the Amendment. He apprehended what they had to think of was, not whether the Bill would pass to-night or to-morrow, but whether, apart from the Amendment, it was likely to effect the object it had in view. That was the only species of success. What fatal consequences would follow if the Amendment were passed? The only consequence would be that they need not continue the discussion that night. The Government would have three days to renew their proposals about loans on the security of the land, and they could go on with the Bill on Thursday. He overheard the right hon. Gentleman say—"Let them throw out the Bill." They had no intention whatever to throw out the Bill. If that had been their intention, they would have done so on the second reading. He had never heard that it was supposed to indicate hostility to a Bill to pass an Amendment of this kind, which, if passed, was not necessarily fatal to the progress of the measure. Was their object to benefit the crofters, or were they simply to be content to disintegrate the land system of the country? If the former, it was vain and futile to imagine one single crofter would be in the least benefited by this barren manipulation of the Land Laws of the country. The crofter had fixity of tenure. He had been in undisputed possession for at least 40 years. No crofter had been in fear of arbitrary eviction for a long period. What those people was in fear of was, not arbitrary eviction, but poverty. That was the cause of their misfortunes. How was the Bill, apart from the Amendment, likely to cure that poverty? How could they stock their lands without capital? Was it not the vainest and most barren thing to say to those poor people they would give them more land; but nothing would induce them to risk one sixpence of public money in order to enable them to make use of the additional land? This was legislation which might injure the landlord; but it could not by any possibility benefit the tenants. The poverty which had been chronic for generations would not be mitigated in the least, do what they would with the Land Laws, unless they were prepared in no ungenerous spirit to carry out some such recommendations as that of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy.

MR. MACFARLANE rose to address the House, when——

SIR TREVOR LAWRENCE (Surrey, Reigate) asked whether the hon. Gentleman, having seconded the Motion, had not exhausted his right of speaking?

MR. SPEAKER said, that it was a well-understood Rule that if an hon. Member seconded a Motion by simply raising his hat he was not precluded from subsequently taking a part in the debate.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll) agreed with the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. A. J. Balfour) that the utility of this Bill depended on the carrying in some shape of the Motion of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George

Campbell). He was amazed at the vehemence, the indignation, and the anger of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who spoke of this proposal as if they were asking him for a gift. No such word had been used in relation to the proposal. This was to be a loan upon what he (Mr. Macfarlane) believed to be very good security, and he would make the right hon. Gentleman an offer. He would accept from him for the Highland people a commission of 5 per cent on the amount he was prepared to give to the Irish people by a Bill which he (Mr. Macfarlane) should probably vote for; but the indignation of the right hon. Gentleman knew no bounds, whatever the security might be. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had said the chief misfortune of these people was poverty. No doubt about that; but how was it brought about? It was brought about by rack-renting, and by a system of clearances which was a scandal and a shame to the country, and it was that scandal which they were trying to redress. His hon. Friend behind him had said this was a shabby Bill. He quite agreed with the description. It was a shabby Bill. It had been drawn by the hand of a miser, and was animated with the spirit of the laird and the factor. It was not such a Bill as he should have expected from the Government, and he was quite sure his right hon. Friend (Mr. Trevelyan), who was lately in charge of it, would have made a better one if he had had the power. He was sure his right hon. Friend's spirit was willing, but his flesh was unfortunately weak, in resisting the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was a landlord's Bill. He was not surprised that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite should support it, and if he were a crofter he should not be glad to see it pass, and if he were a landlord he should pray night and day that it should pass without delay, because this question was advancing, and every year passed would render it more difficult to settle.

Mr. WHITBREAD (Bedford) said, he could not support the Amendment. In the first place, it was too vague, and would lead to expectations which could never be realized. He did not like it either, because it seemed to him to invite the crofters and any poor population in this Kingdom always to fly to the State rather than to depend upon themselves whenever they were in difficulties. Everybody who knew that part of the country to which this Bill was now confined knew quite well that if the crofter was to have more land he must look to his gains from the sea to stock that land; and it was in that direction he should be taught to look, and not to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was glad to see some Amendments on the Paper which were to be moved by his right hon. Friend (Mr. Trevelyan) for the purpose of assisting in developing the fishing industry in the West of Scotland. That was the real harvest which these people could reap. It was idle to divide the land unless they developed their gains from the sea. He hoped these Amendments would be met in no niggard spirit; and he thought they were also entitled to press on the Government in regard to those services it now undertook, not to deal with them in too parsimonious a spirit—he referred principally to the service of the telegraph. It was a mistaken parsimony to make the number of messages the only rule upon which they should extend the telegraph system. There were hundreds and thousands of people who were interested in one and the same message. The fish came into the bays and lochs at uncertain times and in uncertain numbers; and the telegraph was necessary to obtain salt, barrels, staves, and a steamer to carry the fish to the market. Having regard to this, and the difficulty of properly securing the rich harvest when it appeared and despatching it to market, he asked the Government to consider the amount of public benefit which was to arise from a single message. If they did that, he thought they would no longer bind themselves to the hard-and-fast rule of requiring the people to guarantee the expense of the telegraph before they would extend it. Another important point in connection with the development of this fishing industry was that of mussel bait. On many parts of the West Coast this was being destroyed; and he asked whether some general regulation could not be made to prevent the wanton destruction of this useful article, without which it was impossible for the Highlander and the crofter to continue, particularly, their winter fishing? They wanted to develop not only the herring fishing, but the winter fishing.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) said, that the Bill did not give effect to the recommendation of the Royal Commissioners. In regard to what was said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Commissioners were extremely guarded in their proposals as to advances of public money, and they distinctly pointed to the fishing industry as the most profitable direction in which assistance might go. That recommendation was confirmed by the experience of Lady Gordon Cathcart, who had been able to achieve little if any good by a large expenditure on crofts, but whose expenditure on harbours and boats had been productive of the greatest good. For instance, six large boats were fitted out at a cost of £1,500, and in six weeks these boats actually realized 50 per cent on their cost, while they had paid the whole cost before the fishing season ended. The recommendation of the Commission also pointed to the expenditure of money upon harbours, fitting out fishing boats, and the extension of tramways and telegraphs. He thought it would be a great mistake if they were, as was asked by this Motion, to press on the Government to advance the public money in a direction where there was little hope of its being advantageously employed, which, in his opinion, would be tempting the people to turn from that upon which they could profitably expend their efforts to that which would be attended with little success. The Motion before them, therefore, was not, in his opinion, in the real interest of these people, and it would be extremely dangerous if the public money were so spent. He would, therefore, suggest that the Amendment should be altered by leaving out after the words "pecuniary assistance towards that object," and inserting the words "and the objects recommended by the Royal Commissioners."

MR. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.) said, the language of the Motion might be vague, but its object was quite transparent, and everyone could understand what his hon. Friend meant. He did not understand how the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as a Minister of a Government which had granted so much money to Ireland for emigration and other matters, could object to this Motion. He could not see that the suffering and destitute Scotsmen were less entitled to a grant from the Imperial Treasury than the Irish farmer in similar circumstances. There were 26,000 small occupiers within the counties to which the Bill applied. Of that number there were 11,000 representing a population of between 40,000 and 50,000, who each occupied land of less than £4 annual value. How could it be expected that tenants occupying land of that value could obtain a subsistence for their families from the land? He did not think that any person acquainted with agriculture would say that such a thing was possible. Something, therefore, should be done; and he did not think it would be at all inappropriate for the Government to accept the Motion of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy. Such legislation as the Crofters Bill led the people to expect something; and he thought that that expectation, under the circumstances, should be met. Much as he was opposed to grants being made from the Imperial Treasury, he thought that this was a case in which the proposal of his hon. Friend should be agreed to.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) said, he had an Amendment on the Paper which made a certain demand upon the Exchequer, but the competency of which he was told was somewhat doubtful; and he must, therefore, be allowed to say a few words on this Motion. The objection which had been urged against the Motion had mainly been based upon the assumption that the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy made a gratuitous demand for assistance from the Treasury. The hon. Member for Bedford had pointed out that it was much more desirable that money should be spent on objects of a reproductive character, with regard to which the State would not be a loser. He thought the Motion entirely covered objects of that character, and that it might very easily be accepted on the understanding that it was to exclude all objects of a purely eleemosynary character. He was surprised at the strenuous and vehement manner in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had rejected the proposal, because he was entirely mistaken as to the policy of this, or indeed, of any Liberal Government, if objects of this kind were to be regarded as beyond the purview of their policy. He objected to the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaking as if this were a case of Scottish Members knocking at the door of the English Exchequer and asking for money. They asked this money solely for reproductive and for public purposes, and they hoped that the National Exchequer would not lose a sixpence by granting it. He suggested that the Government should accede to the first of two clauses which he had ventured to put upon the Table for insertion in the Bill. That clause was embodied in the Bill of the Government last year, and would go very far to meet the views of his hon. Friend. The object of the clauses was to enable advances to be given on moderate terms to the landowner himself on the security of the land. It would place him in a position to assist his poorer neighbours, and to give them some advantages so as to enable them to stock their farms.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton) asked the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy whether he would remove from his Motion the words in regard to the improvement of land, and he would support it?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: No.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL said, that being the case, he could not support the Motion, the object of which was to encourage what he thought was a fruitless undertaking. Agriculture was in no part of the Kingdom a very prosperous occupation, and still less was it so in the remote and sterile regions to which the Bill applied. Hon. Members had before them the experience of those private individuals who had already undertaken to advance money upon the three schemes open to the inhabitants of this part of the country—namely, agriculture, fishing, and emigration. Of these three schemes the first had proved a total failure; the other two had, so far as they had been carried out, proved a signal success. With the experience they had with reference to fishing and emigration, they would be justified in assuming that public money advanced upon these schemes would be advanced with perfect security to the public. If, therefore, the hon. Member would alter his Amendment so as to limit the advance of public money to the encouragement of fisheries and communications, and to the encouragement of emigration, he would support him.

MR. TREVELYAN (Hawick, &c.) said, he rose to say a very few words—he might almost call them one word—on the practical question as to whether the friends of this Bill should vote for or against this Motion. His hon. Friend had moved an Amendment in very definite terms, which some hon. Members wished him to extend. One of the most ardent supporters of this Amendment was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour); and he must ask the real friends of the Bill who sat around him whether the part of the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman which came most directly from his heart was of a nature to commend his advice to those below the Gangway on the Liberal side of the House? The right hon. Gentleman said the endeavour to remedy the evils in the Highlands was one chiefly at the expense of the landlords, and not at the expense of the general taxpayer. Now, he did not believe, if this Bill were passed, it would be found that these evils had been remedied at the expense of the landlord. He held it was in the interest of the landlords quite as much as of the tenants that this Bill should pass, and pass quickly. Now, what did the Amendment mean? It meant that they should assist the crofters through the landlords in one of three ways. The first was that suggested by his hon. Friend the Member for North-East Lanarkshire (Mr. D. Crawford). That was the clause on which the right hon. Member for Manchester was so very ingenious in his reply to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was a good *tu quoque* argument; but it had very little practical bearing on the case. He maintained that the clause which was in the Bill of last year, and which his hon. Friend proposed to put into the Bill of this year, would be perfectly nugatory. He did not believe any landlord would borrow money for the purpose of stocking his crofts on the security of his land. If this clause were nugatory, what other means were there of spending money? One would be the Irish system of lending five or seven years' rent—he forgot which—to the small crofters. But he never could be a party to recommending the extension of that provision to Scotland. The other method of expending money would be to expend money to enable the crofter to purchase his croft from the landlord. On that point he spoke at some length when he introduced the Bill, and he, as a private

Member, could not recommend that House to embark upon such a questionable mode of proceeding; and the Government with which he had had the honour to serve could never have embarked upon it. He begged the hon. Members around him, who were friends of the Bill, but in a different sense from the right hon. Gentleman opposite, not to vote for this Amendment of his hon. Friend. He sympathized with the Amendment. He was glad to get as much public money for Scotland as could be well expended in Scotland, and which could certainly be returned to the Treasury; and in everything relating to this question of the Highlands he had endeavoured to expend every penny he could obtain from the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what would really be of advantage to the Highlands and Islands, and these principles he would be ashamed to abandon on the very day he left the Treasury Bench. The clauses to which his name would be found attached, relating to the loans for fishing boats, would be of a nature that could be defended by experience, that could not be questioned; and his object could be accomplished for a very small expenditure of money, every halfpenny of which could be returned to the Treasury over and over again. He was glad to see that the Post Office and the Treasury between them had, only within the last two months, established, at a small cost, a system of packet boats, which would treble and quadruple the facilities for carrying fish to the mainland, and thence to the great markets of the cities of Scotland inland. It was in this direction that he hoped they would expend every penny they could obtain; and he trusted hon. Members who wished well to the Bill, would vote against this Amendment, which his hon. Friend, he thought, was not very earnest in pressing.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL asked leave to withdraw his Amendment, and trusted to the moral effect of the discussion.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," again proposed.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said, he did not rise for the purpose of opposing the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, or for impeding the progress of the measure; but he wished to offer a few remarks before the House went into Committee. He recognized the necessity of dealing with the question with justice, and even with generosity, towards the crofter population of the Highlands. For the last 10 years he had spent annually a considerable period in the North of Scotland, and he had some opportunity of making himself acquainted with the condition of the crofters. It was impossible for anyone who had had a personal experience of this nature not to feel a warm and real sympathy with the condition and lot of these people—a condition which, owing to the circumstances with which they were surrounded, must ever continue to be a hard one in the future His observations would not be dictated by any feeling of hostility to the real and true interests of the crofters. While there were many statements with which he cordially agreed in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman in introducing the Bill, there were also many to which he objected. He questioned the historical accuracy of part of the case made out for the crofters, while admitting that they had grievances which might be mitigated, though they could not be altogether removed, by legislation, and that the time had arrived when it was the bounden duty of the Government to deal with the question. As to the historical arguments by which the right hon. Gentleman supported the Bill, it was not the case, so far as he had been able to discover, that the great uprooting of the crofters between 1780 and 1820, which had been described that night as a scandal, was made solely for the purpose alleged by the right hon. Gentleman of establishing great sheep farms. He supposed that the clearances in Sutherland were the clearances which attracted more attention at that time than any other. But why were those clearances effected? It was for a twofold purpose. One was the natural purpose of developing the wealth and the resources of the county; but primarily they were effected for the welfare and the benefit of the crofters themselves. ["Oh, oh!"] Well, he had had the opportunity of acquiring some information which might not have been accessible to others. The condition of the crofters now was immeasurably better than it was previously. A description of the previous condition of the crofters had been written by a gentleman who had exceptional opportunities of obtaining accurate information, and who spent the greater part of his life in trying to improve that condition. Writing particularly of the year 1816-17, Mr. James Loch said :—

> "During the latter period they suffered the extremes of want and of human misery, notwithstanding every aid that could be given to them through the bounty of the landlords. Their wretchedness was so great that, after pawning everything they were possessed of to the fishermen on the coast, such as had not cattle were reduced to come down from the hills in hundreds for the purpose of gathering cockles on the shore. Those who lived in the more remote situations of the country were obliged to subsist upon broth made of nettles, thickened with a little oatmeal. Those who had cattle had recourse to the still more wretched expedient of bleeding them, and mixing the blood with oatmeal, which they afterwards cut into slices and fried. Those who had a little money came down and slept all night upon the beach, in order to watch the boats returning from the fishing, that they might be in time to obtain a part of what had been caught. In order to alleviate this misery every exertion was made by the proprietor. To those who had cattle he advanced money to the amount of above £3,000. To supply those who had no cattle he sent meal into the country to the amount of nearly £9,000."

Mr. Loch was for many years a well-known and respected Member of that House—not a Conservative, but a Member of the Liberal Party; and the honesty and single-mindedness of that Gentleman had never been questioned. The crofters were removed to the coast with the very best of human motives. They were moved to the sea coast, in the first place, because the land adjacent to it was, generally speaking, the most fertile in the whole county; and, in the second place, because they were able to combine the fishing industry with that of agriculture. He agreed with every word which had been uttered by the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread); and he doubted whether, in the course of the debate, anything would be said by any hon. Member more deserving of attention than the advice which the hon. Member gave with regard to the development of the fishing industry in the Highlands. In the third place, the crofters were taken down to the sea coast because they were at all times of the year easily accessible by sea, and it was found possible to transport food to them without the enormous cost and trouble previously experienced. It was absolutely incorrect, therefore, on the part of the right hon. Gentleman to say that the crofters were now in a very depressed and hopeless condition in consequence of the alterations made in their circumstances many years ago. If any further proof were needed of the improved condition of the crofters at the present time, he would like to ask the House to try their condition by one test alone. He thought the House would agree with him when he said that the house in which a man dwelt was not a bad test of the general prosperity of his condition. What was the character of the houses in which the greater portion of the crofters dwelt as compared with the time of which they were speaking? He wished to call the attention of the House to a few sentences from Mr. Loch's Report regarding this matter. It was an accurate description of the crofters' homes at the time spoken of by the right hon. Gentleman—

> "The huts of the people were of the most miserable description. They were built of turf, dug from the most valuable portions of the mountain side. Their roofs consisted of the same material. . . . . Under the same roof and entering at the same door were kept all the domestic animals belonging to the establishment. . . . . The floor was the bare earth, except near the fireplace, where it was rudely paved with rough stone. It was never levelled with much care, and it soon wore into every sort of inequality, according to the hardness of the respective soils of which it was composed. Every hollow formed a receptacle for whatever fluid happened to fall near it, where it remained until absorbed by the earth. It was impossible that it should ever be swept; and when the accumulation of filth rendered the place uninhabitable another hut was erected in the vicinity of the old one. The old rafters were used in the construction of the new cottage, and that which was abandoned formed a valuable collection of manure for the next crop."

This he believed to be a perfectly true description of the character of the dwellings which were inhabited by most, if not by all, of the crofters in the interior of the county from which they were removed. This was the character of the clearances which, according to hon. Gentlemen opposite, were such a scandal and such a shame. He had explained, however, that they were neither in the character of a scandal nor of a shame, but that they were to the benefit of the crofters. He asked the House to contrast their former condition with that of to-day. On the East Coast, and, he be-

believed, also on the North Coast, and in many instances even on the West Coast, they would now find house after house, almost without exception, in the largest part of the county built of stone and mortar, with slated roofs, with boarded floors; and he thought he was justified in appealing to the character of the dwellings which the crofters inhabited to-day, compared with the dog-holes they inhabited 40 years ago, as some reasonable proof in support of his assertion that it was totally untrue to say that the crofters were in a deplorably depressed state now, and in support of his contention that whatever their condition might have been before it was immeasurably better now than in former times. He had already addressed the House at considerable length, but he was anxious to controvert the historic arguments by which the right hon. Gentleman, on behalf of the Government, supported his introduction of this Bill; and, secondly, because he was anxious to take the earliest opportunity in his power of raising his voice in protest against any attempt, from whatever quarter of the House it might come, to extend and largely develop this system where it did not exist at present. The case of the existing crofters was one thing, but it was a totally different thing to try and extend that system, which, he believed, owing to the circumstances of the present day, owing to the great foreign competition we had to contend with in the matter of our food supply, owing to the character of the soil, its barren nature, and the inhospitable climate in which the people lived, was foredoomed, whatever legislation might be adopted, to failure and destruction. On the other hand, it was their duty to recognize the fact that they were confronted with a state of things which they ought to try and grapple with. He was not very sanguine of the beneficial effects of any legislation with regard to the crofters; but he recognized, at the same time, that they had some grievances, and he was prepared to go considerable lengths in the attempt to remedy them. It was undoubtedly a grievance on the part of the crofters that they had not at present by law, in a great number of cases, any compensation for the improvements made by them. He thought they ought to have it, and he was prepared to give his cordial support to that portion of the Bill which dealt with compensation for improvements. He had always advocated compensation of this nature for many years with regard to tenants in England; and he confessed he could see no reason, in point of justice or of right, why the same principle should not be applied to the crofters of Scotland. As far as he knew anything about the question, he believed that what the crofters most desired at the present time was undoubtedly an extension both of their grazing and arable lands, and he was prepared to admit that it was right they should have it. He should be glad to see them have it where it could be done by fair and legitimate means. He believed it was more important, in the cases where crofters' holdings were exceedingly small, that they should have an addition to their arable land rather than, by the addition proposed to be given in the Bill, with respect to grazing land. The extension of grazing land would often be practically useless, because many of the crofters were so poor that they had not capital to stock it. This objection, however, would not apply to small additions of arable farms, where the capital required was the labour of the crofter and his family. The Bill also gave fair rents and fixity of tenure to the crofter. That was simply an application of what he always considered to be some of the worst principles of the Irish Land Bill to Scotland. His experience, and probably the experience of everyone, as to the results of the application of those principles in Ireland was not very encouraging while engaged in considering their extension to other parts of the Kingdom. It reminded him of the occasion, which he well remembered, when the Prime Minister devoted 25 minutes of a powerful speech to an absolute and complete destruction of the principles of fair rent and fixity of tenure now proposed to be embodied in this Bill. He recollected the right hon. Gentleman certainly proving to his satisfaction, and no doubt to his own satisfaction, that the only possible result of the adoption of that system in Ireland must inevitably be to demoralize the people of that country. He suspected that the Prime Minister, if he ever remembered his former speeches, how unhappily the truth of his prediction had been realized in Ireland; and certainly, as far as he (Mr. Chaplin) was concerned, if those principles were to be applied in the North of Scotland in the same circumstances as they were applied in Ireland, nothing on earth would induce him to give his consent to them for a moment. But there was this distinction between the two cases. In Ireland that principle was forced on the landlords of the country, so far as he knew, almost entirely against their will. In the Highlands, on the other hand, so far as he was able to gather, both the landlords and the crofters were equally willing, if not equally anxious, to try it; and, that being the case, he did not feel called upon—certainly he was not prepared—to undertake the responsibility of opposing that part of the measure, however much he might dislike it himself. The Bill contained another principle—a principle which was, as far as he was aware, totally new in English legislation; and that was the principle by which it was proposed to empower the Land Commission to make an order for the compulsory leasing of certain portions of the landlord's estate. He confessed that it was a great strain on the principles of hon. Gentlemen who sat on his side of the House to ask them to consent to a novel and unprecedented proposition of that kind. The very least they could do, however, and the least they could stipulate for if they consented to accept it—he did not give any pledge on that point—was this—that if this principle was to be adopted the landlord, at all events, should have the option of insisting that his land should be bought outright, instead of being compelled to let it on a compulsory lease if he should prefer to sell. Again, he found the Bill interfered with existing leases. As far as he knew, that was an entire and completely novel departure from all recognized principles of English legislation. He acknowledged that it was confined to existing sporting leases, and he was well aware that there was a great feeling of hostility on the part of many persons towards everything connected with the name of deer forests in the Highlands of Scotland. Although that was the case, he was convinced—and he had had opportunities of learning something of this question—that the worst injury that could possibly be done to the crofter population of the Highlands, and to the population of the Highlands generally, would be to carry out legislation by which deer forests should be more or less practically abolished. As stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour) on the second reading of the Bill, an enormous amount of money was brought into the Highlands, and a large amount of labour and employment afforded, by the sporting tenancies which existed in such large numbers in the Northern parts of Scotland. In one county in the Highlands with which he was well acquainted one-half of the revenue of that county was derived from sporting tenancies, and the whole revenue of the county was spent among the people. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] It was all very well for hon. Members below the Gangway to jeer; but how did they think the resident population would appreciate legislation the first result of which would be to diminish by one-half a revenue which for the last 50 or 60 years had been entirely spent among them? There was one criticism which he wished to make upon the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill, and that was to say that one of his statements was absolutely and entirely inaccurate. He said—

> "Now, the deer forests are spreading fast at the expense of the poor remains of the crofters' holdings."

For that statement the right hon. Gentleman had not one single shadow or particle of proof; and he should like to know where those deer forests were situate which were spreading at the expense of the remains of the crofters' holdings at the present time? The right hon. Gentleman's statement was in direct contradiction to the Report of the Royal Commission; and before he could accept his statement as accurately representing the state of things with regard to the spread of the deer forests at the present moment, he must call upon the right hon. Gentleman to tell them where and in what part of Scotland the deer forests were situate which were spreading so rapidly and so disastrously at the present time. Upon that part of the Bill which related to fishing he would not dwell, as he had already said he cordially agreed with the hon. Member for Bedford upon that point. Speaking for himself, and expressing, as he believed, the views of many hon. Members on that side of the House, he might say that they were ready to go to very considerable lengths, and to do much that they believed might be for the advantage of the crofters, and for crofters' holdings, which were existent at the present time. But he was entirely opposed to even a partial development and extension of that system, because he was certain it must result, not only in loss to the community at large, but in misery and poverty to the unfortunate crofters themselves. The House ought to remember, when propositions were made by statesmen for the perpetuation of that system in the Highlands, that a living derived from land in the Highlands, such as was proposed, must at all times be most precarious, if it were owing to the character of the climate alone. He would give a simple illustration. When he left the Highlands last autumn to come down to England for the General Election, he had the opportunity of seeing many crofters, and with some of them in conversation on their prospects of position. Although it was the end of October, none of the corn of that district was carried home, a great deal was not even cut, and there was no chance of it ripening at all during that season. The universal complaint made to him was that the potatoes were all rotten and destroyed; and, as everyone that was acquainted with that locality knew, those were circumstances which must be expected to occur one year out of every three or four years in the Highlands. How was it possible, under those circumstances, for a population to thrive and flourish upon land in parts of the country where the soil was so unfruitful and the climate so inhospitable? He had little confidence in the success of any system of small holdings in these days, whether tenancies or freeholds, in the face of the foreign competition with which they were confronted at the present time, no matter in what part of the country it might be. But if such systems were to be tried, if hon. Members holding extreme opinions were determined to try it, in God's name let the system be tried where it might have some small prospect of success, and let them not try to establish it in parts of the country where miserable and starving populations already existed, and where, owing to the circumstances of the country, they were foredoomed to misery and destitution. He had stated some points in the Bill in which those who acted with him desired amendment. They wished to give a cordial support to Her Majesty's Government in their endeavours to pass the Bill through Committee; and he hoped that the proposals he had made for amendment, and the objections he had raised to the details of the Bill, would receive the fair and candid consideration of the Government. He trusted that they might arrive at a conclusion which would enable them so far to agree with the Party on his side of the House that they should be able, as the measure proceeded, to carry it through to a safe conclusion, and enable them to continue the general support which they desired to give the Bill.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton), said, he regretted that, while the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division (Mr. Chaplin) had promised to support the Government, he should, nevertheless, have carefully refrained from pledging himself on some of the most vital portions of the Bill. In his picture of the inhospitable climate and sterile soil of Scotland, the right hon. Gentleman must have forgotten that the people who were cleared away and their descendants were to be found in a still more inhospitable climate, and on a still more sterile soil. On the North-East Coast of Maine, and in New Brunswick, he would find grey-headed men—he was only speaking from his own experience—who would give him a very different account of the Sutherland clearances, and the burning of their dwellings, in order to dispossess them of their homes. Nor was he quite able to understand the advantage to men who had been brought up to agricultural pursuits of being transplanted to the seaside to follow an industry upon the sea to which they were totally unaccustomed, there being no boats, harbours, or other conveniences furnished to them by the great Lords who dispossessed them. He had no means of determining which of the stories was true; but men he had met in Maine and New Brunswick had told him that they believed they and their fathers had been cleared out and their native glens had been made waste and desolate because wool paid better than human beings. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin) had spoken of the proposal of compulsory leasing as being novel and unprecedented; but, for himself, he apprehended that in the present and in succeeding Parliaments the landed class would have to listen to many proposals that would be to them novel and unprecedented; because in the past the landed class had made the laws for the protection of the landed interest, while in the future the Representatives of the people would deal with the land as subject to the well-being of the State. He had been astounded at hearing that the rents of the deer forests were spent for the benefit of the people in the districts from which they were derived, because he had understood these rents were often spent on the boulevards of Paris and similar places, and that the crofters obtained but the very scantiest advantage from them.

Main Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

I.—*Security of Tenure.*

Clause 1 (A crofter shall not be removed except for breach of statutory conditions).

THE CHAIRMAN: The first Amendment is one which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), who proposes, in line 9, to leave out "crofter," and insert "tenant." As far as I understand the provisions of the Bill, that is an Amendment which is altogether beyond the scope of the measure; and, therefore, I feel called upon to rule that it is out of Order.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I shall be quite ready to explain the scope of the Amendment if the hon. Gentleman will be good enough to allow me to propose it. If, however, he decides that it is out of Order, I should like to ask a question on the point of Order—namely, whether it is possible to extend the scope of the Bill in any direction whatever? The hon. Member will observe that the Preamble of the Bill declares that—

> "It is expedient to amend the Law relating to the Tenure of Land by Crofters in the Highlands and Islands of Scotlands."

But there are Amendments standing in the name of the Government by which it is proposed to extend the provisions of the Bill to fishermen as well as crofters. Will the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) be in Order in moving Amendments to that effect?

THE CHAIRMAN: I am aware that there are Amendments on the Paper in the name of the Government, the object of which is to include fishermen. I am not prepared to say that that is not within the scope of the Bill; but the proposal of the hon. Member to extend this clause from crofters to tenants generally is certainly beyond the scope of the Bill.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): The next Amendment stands in my name; and I propose in page 1, line 9, to insert after "crofter," the words "or cottar." I may say that I have placed other Amendments on the Paper to the same effect, and I may inform the Government that on the division which takes place upon this point will depend whether a large number of cottars in Scotland are to be deprived of all benefit from the provisions of the Bill. The Bill is limited by its title to the tenure of land by crofters; but, notwithstanding that limitation, the measure itself proposes to confer some of the advantages to be derived by the crofters upon the cottars. I know it is desirable that the Bill should pass through Committee as quickly as possible, and I do not believe that there are more than four or five important questions which will have to be discussed. I myself have at least 20 Amendments to propose on the same verbal point as that involved in the present Amendment, and the fate of this one will probably decide the fate of all the others. As I have said, there are involved in the Bill only four or five principles; and as I wish to limit the discussion as much as possible, with a view of doing that, if the Government decline to accept my Amendment I shall take the opinion of the Committee upon it, and then pass on to some other question. The Royal Commissioners who were appointed to inquire into the condition of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland were specially instructed to inquire into the condition of the crofters and cottars; but I find that in the Bill, as it stands, there is no provision in reference to the cottars except the one that I have referred to; and unless my Amendment, or one of the same nature is accepted by the Committee, the Bill will tend to the rapid extermination of the cottars, who have been permitted hitherto to live on sufferance. They only exist by the benevolence of some landlord or other and the public opinion of the neighbourhood, which have hitherto enabled them to live in the miserable buildings they now occupy. If the Bill is passed without my Amendment, that indulgence will no longer be extended to this class of persons, because the landlords will be entitled to say—"Parliament has just legislated on the subject, and has decided that in the public interests we shall be protected if we exterminate this class of occupiers in the Highlands altogether." Now, who are these people? In many instances they are persons who have been imported into the Highlands from England and Ireland, and they have occupied certain pieces of land to which they have no claim. Everybody knows that they are the descendants of crofters, although they are the immediate descendants of evicted tenants. The Bill, as it now stands, proposes that where a remanet of crofters has been left a certain amount of benefit should accrue to them, but where the extermination has been completed, and where there are no crofters at all, that there should be no redress whatever for these persons. What is the proportion of people in the whole Highlands who are affected by the Amendment I now move? I have a Return here in reference to a few of the parishes in the Isle of Skye. In one parish there are 929 persons, comprising 220 families, and 115 of them are described as "cottars and landless." It is the same in half-a-dozen other parishes. I have here a complete list; but I will not trouble the Committee with all the details—I will confine myself to the totals. In the Island of Mull the cottars in one parish amount to 422 persons, and they will all be excluded from redress under the present terms of the Bill. It is stated in a Petition which has been sent to me that the cottars who have been driven off the large farms have been huddled together upon the crofts, notwithstanding the fact that the crofters themselves are unable to give employment, or, indeed, to eke out a subsistence for themselves from the crofts. In one instance I am informed that there are 33 cottars and only 27 crofters. One township in the Island of Mull, a few years ago, contained 40 crofters in comfortable circumstances, each of whom had from 5 to 12 cows, and a fair proportion of sheep. But immediately the present proprietor came into possession he cleared out the whole of them, and not a single crofter has been left upon that estate. The effect, however, of this Bill will be that the landlord who has exterminated the crofters will be free from further trouble. It is only, as I said before, the landlord who has some small remnant of humanity left in him who will suffer from this measure. The Royal Commissioners say in their Report that out of 3,226 families there are 825 unaccounted for, but who must be placed among the landless cottars and crofters; and these 825 comprise more than one-fourth of the population. The Commissioners say that—

> "They are without land and without regular access to local wages—most of them, it may be assumed, scattered among the poor occupiers, to whom they are a heavy burden. Side by side with this mingled multitude, so slenderly furnished with the means of life, we find 30 occupiers, forming less than 1 per cent of the whole community, in the occupancy of nearly two-thirds of the land. These 30 include a factor, a few proprietors, and some non-resident tenants. Taking the four parishes together, we believe that the conditions of tenancy which they reveal may be regarded as fairly representative of the state of the seaboard on the mainland, and of all the Islands from Ardnamurchan, in Argyllshire, on the South, to the borders of Caithness, on the North. A similar repartition of tenancy exists in some districts of the Central Highlands, in Ross, and Inverness, and it prevails over nearly the whole of Sutherland. The evils attached to excessive sub-division and consolidation are less felt in the Southern Hebrides, in certain parts of Argyllshire, on the Eastern seaboard generally, and in Orkney, in all of which the small holdings are, as a rule, of greater dimensions, are more graduated, and are associated in some degree with small farms not inaccessible to the crofting class. The examples which we have selected for analysis above are cases in which clearance and congestion may be observed in close proximity, where the local population has been transferred and crowded, but not removed to a distance, in consequence of the formation of large grazing areas; they are cases in which consolidation has not been in any material degree attended by depopulation. There are other places in which the large farms have absorbed the whole area, in which any small farms which may previously have existed have been extinguished, and in which the poorer order of people, occupying land as sub-tenants,

> have been exceedingly reduced in numbers without being benefited in condition. Examples of the consolidation of pastoral areas, accompanied by the removal and dispersion of the humblest classes connected with the land, might be found in various parts of the Central Highlands of rather ancient date, and on the Western Coast belonging to a more recent period, notable examples of which were submitted to us in connection with the districts of Moreverne, in Argyllshire, and Glenelg, in Inverness-shire. We have, however, selected the parish of Bracadale, in Skye, as a typical instance, and, in regard to the reduction of numbers, not of an extreme character."

The Commissioners then proceed to give further figures with which I will not weary the Committee. I think all hon. Members from Scotland, and most of those from England, will understand the principles involved in this Bill; but I may say that the examples quoted by the Royal Commission may be taken to represent the whole of the country from Caithness to the South of Argyllshire, and that 25 per cent belong to the class for whom I am now pleading. The right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill (Mr. Trevelyan) indicated that it was the intention of the Government to limit the operation of it to existing circumstances, and he added that in no case would they attempt to redress the past. They would treat existing crofters as worthy of some redress; but persons who have ceased to be crofters and become cottars would be worthy of nothing except the payment of their funeral expenses. Now, I think that the right hon. Gentleman made a great mistake in limiting the provisions of the Bill to one class. The measure will certainly fail to secure contentment in the country unless the scope of the Bill is largely extended. What the right hon. Gentleman and the Government wish to do is to fix upon the land those who are now there. It is something like the story we have heard of the travelling game of chess. The game has been played out, and there are few men left on the board; but by some mechanical arrangement they are fixed in their places. The few places which exist in the Highlands from which the crofters have not been exterminated are like those on this chess board; and they are occupied by the poor cottars I am speaking of. What I want is to have the whole of the men placed on the board, and the machinery arranged for fixing them properly in their places. I trust that the Government will accept the proposal I now make to them, and will endeavour to do justice to a class quite as deserving as the crofters—certainly, if suffering gives a claim, even more deserving than the crofters who remain. Although some of them may not be the men who have been evicted, they are, nevertheless, the immediate descendants of evicted tenants. If the Government consent to accept my Amendment, I think they will find that the Bill will slip through Committee much more easily. The principle I am contending for is an exceedingly small one —namely, that the provisions of the measure should be made to contribute to the greatest good of the greatest possible number, instead of, as is now the case, to the least possible good of the least possible number. Under these circumstances, I appeal to the Lord Advocate, who must know the feeling of Scotland on the subject, to yield to this reasonable request.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 9, after the word "crofter," to insert the words "or cottar."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): It is quite impossible for the Government to accept this Amendment. In the first place, I would ask the Committee to take into view the definition of cottar as given in the Bill. Clause 29 says—

> "That a cottar means the occupier of a house with or without land, who pays no rent to the landlord."

[An hon. MEMBER: Or to anyone else.] Therefore, how is it possible for us to provide that a cottar shall not be removed from the holding of which he is tenant? It may be desirable to extend the clause to tenants; and we have a provision in regard to sub-tenants. I think the definition of a cottar always has been that he is a man who is living without paying rent. No doubt the lot of the cottar is one which we must all commiserate; and if we could do anything to alleviate his condition, consistently with sound principles, we should be glad to do so. I wish to point out, in the few remarks I shall have to make, that it has been charged against this Bill that it goes beyond the Report of the Royal Commission, inasmuch as it proposes to confer the benefits specified in it upon all crofters, however low their rents may be, instead of limiting them, as the Royal Commission did, to crofters paying £6 and upwards, or, in the view of a minority of the Commissioners, to crofters paying not less than £4 of rent, That is a matter which the Committee will have an opportunity of discussing on a later Amendment; but if the Amendment now proposed were carried, it would not be a question of giving benefits to existing tenants, but a question of giving land to persons who have none now, and who never had any. I say that advisedly. The hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) spoke of 25 per cent of the Highland population being cottars. That may be correct. There are a large number, no doubt; but I will venture to say that in other parts of the country there is a much larger proportion of the population who are landless in that sense; and, therefore, if we were to accept the hon. Member's view, we should be driven to the general obligation of giving land to every individual. The hon. Member says that one-fourth of the entire population have no right to land, and he proposes to meet their case by this Amendment. Now, I say that this is a proposal of the very largest scope. It is not a question of the relations between existing landlords and existing crofters, but of assigning portions of land to those who have it not, and who have no historical claim to it. Perhaps the Committee will allow me to read a few lines from the Report of the Royal Commission in order to show what is meant by cottars. It is the case that those persons who are called cottars in the Bill, and who are commonly known as cottars in the Highlands, are, in reality, squatters living on land to which they have no legal right or title. The Royal Commission, in their Report, say as to this matter—

> "The social problem in the Highlands and Islands is complicated by the prevalence of subtenancy and squatting. Where this practice is least injurious it takes the form of cottars' holdings, in which the occupiers pay a stipulated rent to the farmer in money or service, and may be regarded as occasional farm servants. A more unhappy case is where the offspring of the recognized occupiers of township holdings remain and multiply on the ground, either sharing the narrow dwelling of the head of the family, or putting up habitations in defiance of estate regulations. But the evil assumes its darkest complexion in the Long Island, where in some places, in the waste, there are crowds of squatters who construct hovels, appropriate land, and possess pasture stock, but pay no rent, obey no control, and scarcely recognize any allegiance or authority. These poor people support themselves by casual labour in the country, by the simpler kinds of fishing, and by wandering elsewhere in quest of work. It is needless to say that they are a burden to the crofter and the proprietor, and that they are in a chronic state of poverty, degenerating, in bad seasons, to absolute destitution."—(P. 43.)

That is the class of persons to whom it is proposed, by a legislative enactment for the first time, to assign the occupancy of land. I have no doubt that the hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) is well founded in the assertion he made, that, to some extent, these cottars are the descendants of evicted crofters; but in many cases they are the descendants of crofters who have not been evicted, but who, instead of going out into the world, as is done by other classes, have remained on the spot, partly, perhaps, owing to the want of means of communication, and partly from the want of knowledge. Anyone who is acquainted with Highland life knows that this is one of the greatest misfortunes, and that, whereas it would never occur that all the children of tenants in the more prosperous and civilized parts of the country would remain on the spot, these unfortunate persons too often never leave the locality in which they have been born, whether there is employment for them there or not. I hope that the establishment of better means of communication and the spread of education will remedy this evil, and that it will not hereafter be the custom, as it has been in the Highlands, for these persons to remain upon one spot where the holdings in the neighbourhood afford no reasonable means of subsistence. I have explained to the Committee the condition of the cottars; and, while I was quite prepared for an attack upon the Government, we have certainly had some attacks this evening which we did not think we should have had. The Government would have no defence if they assigned to every landless person ground which his condition would make it impossible that he could stock or do justice to. Unless the Committee are prepared to accept the view that every landless person in the Highlands, and, as far as I can see, in the Lowlands also, is to get a piece of land assigned to him, it is impossible to hold that cottars can be introduced to the benefits of the Bill. Would it be wise or kind to these poor people in the Highlands to continue them upon land where they find it impossible to obtain the means of subsistence? It is not merely a question of being a crofter tenant, or of not being a crofter tenant; but I maintain that it would not be an act of kindness to these people themselves to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member. The Report of the Crofters' Commission described the poor cottars as being, in many cases, a burden to the crofter and to the proprietor, and as living in a state of poverty degenerating into destitution in bad seasons. Therefore, I put it to the Committee that the Amendment would not only involve an enormous extension of the principle of the Bill, but that it would introduce a principle which is not contained in the Bill. It is no part of the principle of the measure to assign land to every landless person in the Highlands. Its purpose is to give certain benefits to existing crofters; and if we were to go beyond that, I am afraid we should find ourselves landed in enormous difficulty, and that we should introduce a state of matters which would not be to the benefit, but, on the contrary, to the great disadvantage of the cottars themselves.

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I am sorry to see that at the outset of the consideration of this Bill the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has felt it his duty to meet the Amendment of the hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) with such a direct negative. The Bill has been brought forward for the benefit of the Highlands, but one-fourth of the population of the Highlands consist of what are called "cottars;" and the Government now say—"We cannot give to them, in any shape or form, the benefits which we propose to confer upon the crofters." What is it that the Government are giving to us? They are not giving us one-halfpenny of money, and they simply propose to allow us to take land for which we shall be required to pay a fair rent. Is that such a great privilege? Whatever it is, we simply ask that the cottar shall be placed in the same position as the crofter. A great many of them are evicted crofters, or the children of evicted crofters. We have heard a good deal about emigration. Why should these poor people emigrate, and vacate the land for those they leave behind them? What they say is—"Why should we emigrate when there are hundreds of thousands of acres of land we can cultivate and render valuable?" They maintain that the land was not made for a few landlords, but for the benefit of the people; and, therefore, they do not feel inclined to move away from the land and leave it in the undisputed possession of the landlords. The landlords themselves can emigrate if they desire; and under these circumstances I do not see why the Committee, for a moment, should accept the views of the Lord Advocate. The Government do not propose to give us much. The Bill simply allows the people to possess the original right to the land to be able to take it at a fair rent. Why should we say to the crofters—"If you want land you can have it, as you have already an acre or two of land;" and then say to the cottar—"You have no land at all, but only half an acre of garden ground. Your position is therefore very different, and we will do nothing for you at all." I certainly hope the Committee will not adopt the view of the Lord Advocate. We have heard the Highlands spoken of as if they were most uncivilized. The Lord Advocate talked of more civilized places in the South. If poverty means want of civilization, then certainly there is a good deal of it in the Highlands; but if acuteness, intelligence, good manners, and good breeding are to count, there is quite as much civilization in the Highlands as there is in the South; indeed, as far as my experience goes, there is a great deal more, and the people of the Highlands will compare favourably with any other class of persons in the Kingdom. The Government say they will be glad to do everything they can to alleviate the condition of these people. What I want them to do is to give to all of them a fair start—cottars, crofters, and everybody else. We do not ask for land without the means of stocking it. If the Government will not help the cottars in that direction their friends may not be able to supply them with funds to stock their small holdings, and they might find that not one-fourth of these cottars would ask for land at all. They have no money to stock it with; they would, therefore, not ask for it; and, consequently, the benefit which the Government intend to confer on them by this Bill is not quite so great a benefit as they suppose. I do not see why, for a moment, the Committee should concur with the Lord Advocate in supposing that any great amount of benefit will be conferred by this Bill either upon the crofters or the cottars. All that I ask for both classes is simply that justice should be done to them.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I would point out that what the Lord Advocate has said is quite evident from the drafting of the Bill, which defines that a—

> "Cottar means the occupier of a house with or without land who pays no rent to the landlord;"

but, as has also been pointed out from passages in the Report of the Royal Commission, there are many cases in which these cottars do pay rent to tenants, and in other cases render services which are equivalent to rent. Not merely is that the case, but I find that there is a provision in the Bill which I think explains the idea which has been expressed in regard to the cottar as distinguished from the crofter. Clause 9 gives compensation to the cottar for improvements on removal. It provides that—

> "When a cottar is removed from his dwelling and any land or buildings occupied by him in connection therewith, he shall be entitled to compensation for any permanent improvements;"

and Sub-section (*c.*) of that clause gives a Proviso that—

> "Such improvements have not been executed in virtue of the stipulations of a lease or in virtue of any agreement or understanding expressed in estate regulations or other writings."

In other words, they get the ground on which they squat on condition of improving it by putting their labour into it, and yet they are now told that they are not to come under the benefits of the Bill because they do not pay rent. But they pay what is equivalent to rent. I think the case of the cottars illustrates the inconvenience of the Government appealing to the Report of the Royal Commission as if the Bill had been drafted in accordance with the recommendations of the Report of that Commission. The Commissioners recommended that certain substantial benefits should be conferred upon the cottars, and made provision not that cottars who had no land should receive a share of it, but that when vacancies occurred in the townships the case of the cottars should be taken into consideration among others, and proposed that they should be given other independent improvements in the shape of permanency of tenure—for instance, such as not being removable with less than a year's notice. Some of these benefits are included in the Bill, but not to the extent recognized in the Report of the Royal Commission. The reference which I have made to Sub-section (*c.*) of Clause 9 shows that, although direct rent may not be paid to the landlord, what is equivalent to rent is paid as a condition of occupancy, and for that reason I shall vote for the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): This matter has been fully considered by the crofter Members, who are determined to fight it to the last, as, in point of fact, they told the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) the other day. My hon. Friend the Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) has given some statistics in reference to the crofters and cottars; but I should like, although very briefly, to give a little more insight into the condition of the cottars. In one of the Islands in the county of Inverness two-thirds of the land are held in two farms; but there are, nevertheless, 73 cottars upon that Island. Upon South Uist there are 160 cottars who do not own land, while there are 11 tacksmen with gigantic farms. And, in addition to these 160 cottars and 11 tacksmen, there are 36 farm labourers who are anxious to get land. In the Island of Skye there are upwards of 1,200 cottars who have no land. I would ask the Government whether, when they brought in this Bill, they did so with a real intention of endeavouring to settle the question. I am quite sure that it is utterly impossible to do so if the cottars are to be kept out of its benefits. I must say that it was with great regret I found the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate taking up so strong and decided a stand on the subject. I fully concur in the remarks which were made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ross (Dr. R. McDonald) that the Crofter Members are prepared to fight out the case of the cottars to the last, and I hope they will have the intelligent support of the House generally.

Mr. SAUNDERS (Hull, E.): I understood the Lord Advocate to give two reasons for refusing to accept this Amendment, and thereby give land to the cottars. The first was that they have no land at all; and the second was that they are a burden upon the crofters. I could understand these two reasons if they had been used on the opposite side of the House. Who in the world should land be given to by the Bill but those who have not got it now? It is by acting on the opposite principle that we have got into our present difficulties. It has been the giving of the land to the rich which has brought the country to its present position. We have been reduced to want because the land has been given to the rich. We give the land to those who already have too much of it, and you take it away or give it not to those who really require it. I believe it will be in the recollection of hon. Members that some years ago a number of convicts whose term had expired gave a great deal of trouble to the community. Government were at their wits' end to know what to do with them, and finally they thought it expedient to give each of them 40 acres of land. After that they had no further trouble with them. That, I think, is exactly what would happen in Scotland if the land were fairly distributed among the people. There would be no further difficulty at all. The difficulties which it is found are now quite impossible to get over would be readily surmounted if you will allow the people a fair opportunity of getting the land and working upon it. We are told that the cottars who are now squatting on the land are a burden to the crofters. How can they be otherwise than a burden upon the crofters if they have no land? Land is the natural means by which a working man can get a living, and, if you deprive him, they are obliged to be a burden to somebody. I am obliged to the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate for the facts he has supplied us with; but I do hope that the Committee will apply them in an exactly opposite direction.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Before the Committee come to a decision upon this Amendment, I think we ought to be agreed as to what a cottar is. The right hon. and learned Lord Advocate said, as I understood him, that the meaning of the term "cottar" is that he is the inhabitant of a house without land—that he pays no rent to a landlord or to anybody else. Now, does the right hon. and learned Gentleman really suppose that the cottar pays no rent to anyone? Is the middleman in no sense the landlord? I want to know whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman considers that a man who occupies a house, or holds a garden or a kail-yard, is to be classed as a crofter or a cottar? There are, I think, three distinct classes among the people of the Highlands and Islands—the crofter, who is the tenant of the holding as specified in the Bill; the squatter, whom I understand the Lord Advocate to mean by the word "cottar;" and a class of cottar who is a small tenant paying a small rent, perhaps, to another tenant, partly in kind and partly in money. I want to know which of the last two classes is included in the Bill?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): It is certainly desirable that there should be a clear understanding as to what the meaning of the Amendment is. The principle of the Amendment appears to me to be the giving of the benefits provided by the Bill to a class of persons who are at present not in the occupation of any land at all. The Bill, as it stands, is undoubtedly applicable to all crofters; and a crofter is defined to be the tenant of a holding from year to year who habitually resides on his holding, the annual rent of which does not exceed £30 in money, and which is situated in a crofting parish. The holding itself is defined to be any arable or pasture land, so that any person who is in the occupation of either arable or pasture land is a crofter, and will come within the scope of the Bill. With regard to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), certainly a person would not be a crofter under this clause who is merely in the occupation of a house and a garden; but if he is in the occupation of arable land or pasture land which is not merely a garden, then he will come within the scope of the Bill. Now, what is the proposal contained in this Amendment? The proposal in the Amendment is to make all the clauses of the Bill applicable to cottars and persons in the occupation of houses without any land. I would ask the Committee to consider for a moment what the effect would be. It is a Bill which gives compensation to tenants for improvements in regard to holdings. The crofters will get the benefit of the compensation for improvements, because the provisions of the Bill are made specially applicable to them. But is it seriously proposed to apply a clause dealing with the enlargement of holdings to persons in the occupation of houses without land at all? I was much surprised to hear my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser - Mackintosh) speak so strongly in support of this Amendment, because I observe that in the Report of the Royal Commission, in which my hon. Friend concurred, an opinion is expressed that it would be most inexpedient to extend the benefits proposed even to crofters who are in the occupation of premises rented at less than £6 a-year. My hon. Friend, no doubt, objected to that Report; but he appended a Memorandum to the Report, in which he said that crofters whose premises were not rented at more than £4 a-year should not be admitted. Now, it is difficult for me to see that if it is considered inexpedient to apply the recommendations of the Royal Commission to crofters occupying at a less rent than £4, why we should consider it expedient to apply them to persons who occupy no land at all. It would be an aggravation of the present evils which this Bill is intended to remedy if the Committee were to apply the clause for the enlargement of occupation to persons having houses with no land at all. It would necessarily lead to the continuance of the system of sub-division, and would operate against the consolidation of holdings, which is certainly one of the benefits that will, I hope, follow the passing of the Bill.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): The Committee have not yet had any express or precise definition of the term "cottar." The Bill states that it is to mean—

> "The occupier of a house with or without land who pays no rent to the landlord."

There are many occupiers who pay rent to the landlord and also to the superior tenant. Are they included in the benefits of the Bill or not? [Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: No.] Then all those who pay rent to the landlord will be excluded from the benefits of the Bill. I am taking the case of the occupier of a house who does pay rent to the landlord.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: He is not a crofter, and, therefore, in no way entitled to the benefits of the Bill—by which my hon. Friend means, I suppose, the affirmative benefits—namely, fixity of tenure, fair rent, and enlargement of holding. The definition both of a crofter and a cottar is contained in Section 29 of the Bill, which provides that it is to mean—

> "A tenant of a holding from year to year, who habitually resides on his holding, the annual rent of which does not exceed thirty pounds in money, and which is situated in a crofting parish."

The "holding" means—

> "Any piece of land held by a crofter, consisting of arable or pasture land, or of land partly arable and partly pasture, and which has been occupied and used as arable or pasture land (whether such pasture land is held by the crofter alone or in common with others) for a period of not less than five years prior to the passing of this Act, but does not include garden ground only, appurtenant to a house."

No person who does not satisfy that condition is entitled to the affirmative benefits of the Bill. We propose to give to the cottar class the benefit of the extension of the principle of compensation, inasmuch as they have been allowed, without objection, to put up premises on land, and we say that they shall not be turned out without being compensated; but I understand that the question my hon. Friend asks now applies to a person without land who pays no rent to the landlord, and he contrasts that with the position of some other person who pays rent to someone who may be a sub-tenant. But a sub-tenant is not entitled, under the Bill, to extend his holding, and we propose to make it a statutory condition to the crofter as long as the holding is sub-let. Sub-letting, I am sorry to say, is the addition of an enormous evil to the squatting power of the cottar. No person who does not affirmatively possess the requisites of the crofter can secure the benefits of the Bill.

MR. MACFARLANE: I understand the explanation of the right hon. and learned Gentleman; but there is another point which I desire to submit. The definition laid down by the Bill is—

> "The occupier of a house with or without land who pays no rent to the landlord."

Well, what I want to know is, whether, in the case of the cottar paying some rent, he is to be deprived of his condition of cottar, and is not to come into the benefits of Clause 9? So far as I am able to understand the view of my right hon. and learned Friend, it is that this Bill lays down the Scriptural principle that to him who hath shall be given, while from him who hath nothing shall be taken away even that which he hath. I do not think it is desirable to discuss the question further than to obtain a clear definition of the question I have raised. Clause 9 provides that certain compensation shall be given to the cottar; and Clause 29 defines that a cottar means—

> "The occupier of a house with or without land who pays no rent to the landlord."

Therefore a cottar who pays 5*s.* a-year to the landlord must be understood to be deprived of the benefits of this Bill.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): This is one of the three points we consider to be vital in the Bill; and if the clause is carried in its present form, and all the other Amendments relating to the cottars are kept out, we shall not consider that the Bill is worth having. In the first place, the clause strikes out one-fourth of the inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland from the benefits of the Bill; and it will, undoubtedly, intensify their present condition of distress. There is, however, one class of cottar which has not yet been mentioned, and that is those who have been cleared away from the tenements they formerly occupied, and who are squatting now on waste lands not owned by anybody. A large number of crofters who have been evicted from the townships in order that big farms and deer forests might be made have gone to these waste lands and squatted on them. They have reclaimed a considerable portion of such waste lands, and there they are, owning no landlord. They have as much right to the land as anybody else; and yet this clause of the Bill will keep them out from the benefits of the Act. The Lord Advocate has entirely ignored the economical conditions of the Highlands, as well as the Report of the Royal Commission, which was that you should make the township the element you should go upon. I trust that hon. Members will support us on this point—namely, that when there is an extension of the township one-fourth of the population comprised in the cottar class shall get their fair share. In the enlargement of individual holdings the compensation given for making additions, such as fencing pasture land, will be of very little worth unless you give the land to the township and the cottar as well as to the crofter.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The distinction which has been drawn between the crofter and the cottar is a very false one. In the Bill itself the cottar is defined to be—

> "The occupier of a house with or without land who pays no rent to the landlord."

But in the Report of the Royal Commission upon the condition of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland there is a definition of the terms "crofter" and "cottar." The Commissioners say—

> "The classes whose condition we have been directed to study are designated as crofters and cottars. By the word 'crofter' is usually understood a small tenant of land with or without a lease, who finds in the cultivation and produce of his holding a material portion of his occupation, earnings, and sustenance, and who pays rent directly to the proprietor. The term 'cottar' commonly imports the occupier of a dwelling with or without some small portion of land, whose main subsistence is by the wages of labour, and whose rent, if any, is paid to a tenant and not to the landlord. The crofter is a small farmer who may live partly by the wages of labour; the cottar is a labourer who may have some share in the soil. But these definitions are deceptive, for there are crofters who are sub-tenants under tacksmen; and there are many cottars who pay rent to the owner. The distinction between the two classes is more easily felt and understood than delineated. Nor is a strict definition necessary. For the purposes of this Inquiry and Report we limit the class of crofters to tenants paying not more than £30 annual rent; but we are unable to fix any point in rental below which the crofter descends into the cottar class."—(P. 3.)

The Lord Advocate has stated that a sub-tenant ought not to be entitled to any of the benefits of the Bill; but the Report of the Royal Commission says "that there are some cottars who are sub-tenants;" and it says, further, that "there are many cottars who pay rent to the owners." Therefore, they took a course which would exclude some crofters and some cottars, but would, at the same time, admit some of both classes.

The Report of the Commission further states—

> "Of the terms under which the smaller tenants held their possessions no definite account is presented; but it is assumed that they were entitled to security of tenure, subject to rent and services, as the descendants and successors of those subordinate members or dependants of a family who in former ages won the land for the clan and maintained the fortunes of the chief by their swords. This claim to security of tenure is held to have been in some sort transmitted to existing occupiers."—(P. 5.)

Further on the Commissioners say—

> "There have been in some districts from an ancient date small tenants holding farms in common, and paying rent direct to the proprietor. Such, undoubtedly, existed in considerable numbers in the latter half of the century. In these cases the small tenants occupying large areas at low money rents, and little vexed by services to the landlord, who was remote or indulgent, no doubt enjoyed a life of tolerable ease and abundance, diversified from time to time by the deprivations caused in years of scarcity. Of such a state of existence there are some indications which it is consolatory to identify among the painful records of penury and oppression which form the burden of the contemporary literature devoted to the subject. The larger proportion of the land in the Highlands and Islands was, however, held by tacksmen or leaseholders from the proprietor or chief, and the mass of cultivators lived under their sway as sub-tenants at will, paying rent in money, kind, and service."—(P. 5.)

This mass of persons, who are really crofters, are to be excluded by the right hon. and learned Gentleman's definition from deriving any benefit from the main provisions of the Bill. And now I come to the real point of the definition. It is stated that the cottar is merely a sort of sub-tenant, with a smaller amount of land and less stock than the crofter. And yet between the two classes, which had originally the same rights, a hard line is to be drawn—one class is to have considerable benefit, but the other is to have none at all. The only distinction seems to be that these are the men who have been the least able to resist the depredations of the landlords.

SIR JOHN RAMSDEN (York, W.R., Osgoldcross): I hope the Committee will support the Lord Advocate when we go to a division. I believe there will be found to be on all sides of the House a very general desire to support the Government in their endeavour to settle this question. There are many hon. Members who may think that the Bill of the Government goes too far; but who will, nevertheless, vote with Her Majesty's Ministers in support of it, because they are of opinion that the Government have shown an earnest desire to consider the rights of all concerned, and to settle the question in as satisfactory a manner as the case will permit. The object of the Bill, as I understand, is to maintain the crofters in their possessions; but the arguments which we have heard in support of the Amendment go very much beyond that. The object of the Amendment is not to maintain the crofters in their possessions, but to take the land from those to whom it belongs and to give it to those who have no claim to it whatever. For my part, I cannot see, if you are to take land by compulsion and give it to the cottars who do not possess it now, and who never have possessed it, why you should stop there. Why not take the whole land of the country and divide it up? It seems to me that the arguments brought forward in favour of the Amendment really carry you to that extent. I shall certainly vote in support of the Lord Advocate when we come to a division; and I hope that the right hon. and learned Gentleman will be supported by a large majority of the Committee.

MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I entirely concur in the view which has been expressed by the hon. Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane)—namely, that the definition of a cottar contained in Clause 29 of the Bill shall mean—

> "The occupier of a house with or without land who pays no rent to the landlord,"

is ridiculous, if you provide that the cottar shall lose the benefit of the Bill by the fact that he does pay some rent. I would suggest this alteration in the definition—that a cottar shall mean a person, with or without land, not paying rent to a crofter. I am satisfied that when the Definition Clause is reached it will require a considerable amount of overhauling.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I believe that if an Amendment of this kind were carried the whole benefit which the most sanguine advocate of the Bill can anticipate from it in the Highlands of Scotland would be done away with. I am satisfied that if we were to adopt such an Amendment, we should, by our legislation, inflict upon the soil and upon the population, who cannot now by any possibility extract an adequate livelihood from the soil, an absolutely irreparable injury, compared with which all the injury done by the most reckless landlord who has evicted his tenants in order to make sheep-farms would sink into insignificance. One hon. Gentleman who spoke to-night talked of the natural right of every man to rent some of the soil. Another hon. Gentleman—I think the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Saunders)—seemed to regard as a universal panacea for all social ills that every man should be put in the occupation of a holding of 40 acres of land. Now, it matters very little what the Committee declare the natural right of every man to be, because, unfortunately, the law would make short work of his natural right. Whatever may be the natural right of these squatters to rent land which they cannot cultivate or stock, the fact is that there is no land for them to rent; and it matters nothing what a man's natural rights may be if the laws of geometry are altogether against him. I feel very keenly on this point. Hon. Members who take the view of the hon. Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane) absolutely ignore the very root and origin of the evil from which the people of the Highlands suffer. The root and origin of the evil—and it is recognized by every impartial investigator—is that for the whole population there is not adequate employment; and what advantage can result from rooting on the soil those who at this moment cannot find employment upon it? Now, are you going to deny to others who become discontented in their turn and become squatters, the rights you propose to give to the existing squatters? The existing squatters have come there by no arbitrary Act; but simply because the State regulations were not adequate to keep them off land to which they had no right or title whatever. There can be no doubt that if we pursue this legislation the race of squatters will augment and multiply. What are you going to do with the addition to the race of squatters? Are you going to fix them on the soil, and to carry on the same system *ad infinitum?* If so, how long will it be before the chronic want of which you now complain will turn into chronic starvation? This is in no sense a landlord's question. It is a question vitally affecting the prosperity not of the landlords, but of the existing crofters, and it is in their name, and their name alone, that I most earnestly implore the Committee to support the Government in resisting the Amendment.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 105; Noes 196: Majority 91.—(Div. List, No. 48.)

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I rise to move to insert, after the word "crofter," the words "or fisherman." If there is in the Western Highlands of Scotland, besides the crofters, a class of people endeavouring to exist upon difficult conditions—if there is one class more than another who require the protection which this legislation is intended to give, it is the class of fishermen. Now, the occupants of houses without gardens are not to be included in the provisions of the Bill at all. By an Amendment on the Paper I understand that the Government are willing to include fishermen in the cottar class. The privilege of the cottar class is that if they are dispossessed they will be compensated for any improvements they have made. Now, what I wish is to have the fisherman secured in his house; I wish to give him fixity of tenure, and secure him also fair rent. I do not wish to give him power to get more land, but to protect him against an arbitrary advance of rent on the part of the landlord. I think it very desirable that there should be an improvement in the harbours in the Western Highlands, and that other advantages should be given for the development of the fisheries; but there is too much reason to fear that if that improvement took place the landlord would come in and increase the fisherman's rent. Now, I propose this Amendment for the purpose of securing to the fisherman fixity of tenure and fair rent, in view of the improvements which I hope to see, even if those improvements are effected at the public expense.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 9, after the word "crofter," to insert the words "or fisherman."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am afraid that we cannot assent to this

Amendment. But we have made what we think a reasonable and adequate provision by putting an Amendment on the Paper for the compensation of fishermen. The Amendment provides that a fisherman shall be defined as a person carrying on the occupation of fishing, and living in a house of which he pays the rent, and that he shall not be removed without compensation. To give fixity of tenure to any person simply because he follows a certain occupation would be entirely beyond the intention of the Bill. I am bound to say that the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) stated an argument of a kind which seems to tend in a direction opposite to his Amendment. The hon. Member said, and we are fully alive to the view, that the best way to ameliorate the condition of the fisherman is to give him fixity of tenure. But there are many other trades the members of which would be benefited by fixity of tenure; and if you are to give fixity of tenure to the fisherman you will be required to give it to the blacksmith, carpenter, grocer, postmaster, and others who occupy houses. Whenever you get beyond what we have stated to be the principle of this Bill you come to a class of cases not in the least peculiar to the Highlands and Islands, but to all parts of the country abutting on the sea-shore. Therefore, it is quite impossible for us to accept the Amendment. But, reverting to the Amendment just disposed of, I may say, with reference to statements which have fallen from several hon. Members relative to the state of the cottar, that we will consider as to whether any alteration should be made in the definition of the term.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR: There is one consideration I desire to submit to the Lord Advocate, and it is the necessity for the fishermen to occupy sites close to the sea and in localities suitable for hauling up boats, for nets and lines. They are thereby specially exposed to the action of parties who now lay claim to rights over lands needed for fishings. The fishermen cannot evade extortionate demands by a change of residence, as the classes named can do. I have no doubt the payments by fishermen for sites have since my boyhood largely increased. The additions have not been for benefits conferred by the proprietors, but are solely due to the enterprize of the fishermen. Indeed, the privileges of this class have been lessened. The rights to the foreshores have been taken away in a form dangerous to the rights now claimed over fishing sites by parties whose titles to the land might, perhaps, be justly questioned.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: I think the objection of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate does not hold good with regard to my Amendment. He says that if we give fixity of tenure to the fisherman we shall have to give it to the blacksmith. But the right hon. and learned Gentleman proposes to treat the fisherman in an exceptional way by lending money to develop the fishing industry. Now, it is quite easy to do this at the public expense; but, at the same time, he makes no provision for giving the fisherman the benefit of it. I say that if we spend money on nets or harbours, or in establishing improved communication with the Islands, there is the risk that the landlord will deprive the fishermen of the benefit of it by the raising rent. I wish to provide against that by giving the fisherman security of tenure and fair rent.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I wish to say a few words in support of the contention of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay). It is not an uncommon thing in the East of Scotland to find certain fishing dues charged by proprietors to fishermen, which, at so much per man amounts, in some cases, to £10 a-year. If the fisherman refuses to pay these charges the landlord may raise his rent upon him, or order him to quit the house at the next term. This man, although he has made the industry for himself, is not protected. Why, I ask, should he be deprived of his house; and why should the proprietor have power to raise the rent? There is no class of the community which more requires the protection of the Legislature with regard to their holdings than fishermen. Their circumstances are exceptional; they have often no alternative but to leave the district or pay these dues; and I hope the Government will give an undertaking that their case shall be dealt with in the way proposed in this Amendment. It is a very hard thing that fishermen, when they have created their industry, should be made to pay, because they have no alternative, £50 an acre for land which is not worth more than £1 10*s*. an acre.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 108; Noes 219: Majority 111.—(Div. List, No. 49.)

MR. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): Mr. Courtney, I beg to move to insert, after the word "crofter," in page 1, line 9, the words "the annual rent of whose holding in money is four pounds or upwards." The object of this Amendment is to confine the operation of the Bill to those crofters who are not of the poorest class—to those who may be expected to derive real benefit from its provisions—and not extend it to those to whom its provisions would be a snare and no advantage whatever. It will be observed that the clause has reference to tenure: it proposes to give to the crofter something like fixity of tenure under reasonable conditions. Now, there is no doubt that this privilege would be accepted by the crofter as an encouragement to seek his livelihood, to a greater or less extent, in connection with his holding. But such encouragement would be no kindness to the very poor crofter. A man who has a plot of ground the extent or value of which may be measured by the fact that he pays a rent of only £2 or £3, cannot depend in any degree upon the croft for his living; and to lead such a crofter to think of himself as settled upon his land by Act of Parliament would only be to make him less likely to exert himself to improve his position in other ways. From the Report of the Commissioners, and from the experience of all who know the Highlands, we find that the great difficulty of doing good by legislation of this kind is found in the fact that the crofters are so poor. It is proposed by this Bill to give an extension of holdings; but, as has been already said to-night, an extension of his holding is of questionable value to a crofter who has not the capital to stock the croft. In the case, then, of very poor crofters this objection holds with special force. We find that by this Bill itself an extension of holding is only to be given when the Commissioners are satisfied that the crofter is able to work and to stock the increased holding. That, of course, cannot be said to apply in the case of a very poor man. Then the question is, have we no sympathy with the very poor crofter? Yes; we have sympathy with him, but we wish our sympathy to be of a practical kind. We feel for the poor crofter, who is in a deplorable condition at present; but our desire is to give him real and effectual assistance. We wish to help him out of his misery, and not to fix him in it. We wish to help him out of his misery by opening up better outlets for his industry and by giving facilities and encouragement for more remunerative employment. To encourage these poor crofters to look for relief in the continued occupation of their small holdings, is only to deceive them. On this subject I will refer to the opinion of the Commissioners. In their Report this point is fully discussed, and, with the permission of the Committee, I will quote a passage from page 39. In the previous part of their Report the Commissioners say that their suggestion refers to crofters who pay a rent of £6 and upwards; and, treating of improving leases, they report of the smaller tenants in the following terms:—

"It may be objected to the scheme which has been proposed, that the protection and encouragements afforded to the higher class of crofters above the level of the £6 line are withheld from those of an inferior condition, forming in most localities, we regret to say, the vast majority, and who may need such safeguards equally or more. This must be admitted. The poorer sort are here endowed with no formal security against eviction or excessive rents. The inequality of treatment is manifest and may appear unjust. If we allow it we do so not from a want of sympathy for the class excluded—we accept an evil to avoid a greater evil still."

And they continue—

"To invest the most humble and helpless class of agricultural tenants with immunities and rights which ought to go hand in hand with the expansive improvement of the dwelling and the soil, would tend to fix them in a condition from which they ought to be resolutely though gently withdrawn."

These are the words of the Report of the Commissioners, a Report which is signed by all the Commissioners. But in an Appendix to the Report the hon. Gentleman the Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh) states his objection to the particular figure which is used in the Report—the figure of £6—as the minimum. He says—

"I do not wish to perpetuate small crofts;" but "the figure of £4 would, in my opinion, be, though high enough, a fair one, and having been recognized by the Valuation Act of 1854, has a distinct significance."

So that the opinion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Inverness-shire is that £4 is the proper limit. I have taken advantage of that suggestion in the Amendment which I now beg to propose for the acceptance of the Committee.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 9, after the word "crofter," to insert the words "the annual rent of whose holding in money is four pounds or upwards."—(*Mr. J. A. Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): This is an Amendment proceeding in an exactly opposite direction to the last two Amendments, and just as we felt it our duty to resist the last two Amendments we feel it our duty to resist this. We think we have hit the proper mean between the two courses. There is no doubt that the Report of the Commissioners does say that in the judgment of those who reported many of the advantages could not be fully enjoyed by persons holding crofts under £6, or, in the judgment of one Commissioner, under £4; but when regard is had to the statistics given by the Commissioners, and to the obvious fact that upon their statistics there would not have been any benefit whatever given to somewhere about nine-tenths of the population, and also to the hope which we cherished of great advantage being derived from the development of the fishing industry, aided, as we propose to aid it, we have thought it right that every crofter should have the benefits of the Bill, even although his rent may be comparatively small. I understand that the objections which are taken resolve themselves substantially to this—It would be an encouragement to very small crofters to remain upon the land. Well, there would be no compulsion upon such persons to remain on the land. I do not suppose any of us wish to see them evicted from the land—turned off the land by force; but even when they get the benefits we propose to confer upon them by this Bill they will be as free to go voluntarily as they ever were. Therefore, it is very difficult to see how there would be any fixing by way of attachment to the ground by the carrying of this provision. It is very true, no doubt, that the mere cultivation of a croft of a £6 or a £4, or a less rent, will not be adequate to sustain a family, or even to sustain a crofter without a family; but then it is notorious that a very large number of the inhabitants of the Western Highlands and Islands pursue other callings along with that of the cultivation of the soil—particularly they pursue the calling of fishing. Now, I do not think that the holding of a small croft of the size referred to would at all distract the attention of the crofter from diligently pursuing the business of fishing. He would have a small patch of potato land, he would perhaps have a few beasts on the land—he would be much better off if he had both; and one of the greatest complaints made by those who have been too much restricted as regards their land is that they have no cows, and therefore no milk for their families. In like manner a great complaint has been that they had no potato ground. If it was simply a question between cultivating land or pursuing a more lucrative industry, there might be a great deal in the Amendment; but it is notorious that these men do have the opportunity of doing all they need to do on the croft, and their families do the rest—their families do the rest while they are engaged in fishing. I believe that those who are best acquainted with this matter feel that not only would it be an enormous disappointment to about nine-tenths of the crofter population if they were excluded from the benefits of the Bill, but that the ideas put forward against the extension of the benefits of the Bill to these people have no great amount of foundation. I have not referred on previous occasions to the statistics given as to the relative proportion in which the tenants under £4 or £6 stand to those above; but I have before me, on page 11 of the Crofter Commissioners' Report, the statement that of 420 crofters and cottars in Uig, Lewis, there are five who pay over £10 and under £30, 22 who pay between £6 and £10, and 393 who pay under £6. Now, if the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen (Mr. Campbell) were carried, these 393 crofters and cottars would receive no benefit from the Bill. I believe that the case is not materially different in other parts of the country.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): Mr. Courtney, I desire to give an illustration of how this Amendment would operate. I will take the county of Sutherland. In that county there are 2,500 crofter holdings; 500 crofter holdings are above the £4 limit and 2,000 are below it, so that by the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Campbell) four-fifths of the crofters of Sutherland would be deprived of any benefit under the Bill.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I can perfectly understand its being a strong reason for not making any alteration in the Bill in the direction of the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Campbell) that it would cause great disappointment. My right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate says that if there was any limit such as is described by the Committee and suggested by this Amendment, it would cause very great disappointment indeed. No doubt, it would, Sir; but I want to know if the right hon. and learned Gentleman means to tell this Committee that he believes that the ultimate result of this Bill will not be disappointment? It is not for the Legislature to pass measures which will merely give present satisfaction and present gratification to the people. The right hon. and learned Gentleman repudiates what is laid down distinctly by those who formed the Royal Commission, and who considered the matter with due care, and under whose advice the Government professed in bringing in this Bill to be acting, when he proceeds to do that which the Commission have practically declared will lead in the near future to an infinitely worse state of things than that which at present exists. It is not the duty of the Legislature and it is not the duty of a Government to evade present disappointment. In legislating, it is the duty of the Government, to act in such a way as shall produce permanent satisfaction. Now, Sir, the Royal Commission have most distinctly and clearly expressed their opinion that no permanent benefit—nay, not even any real benefit for a short time—is to be attained by taking any other course than dealing with the crofters who have very small crofts upon the footing that they shall be firmly but gently withdrawn, and my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh), who, undoubtedly, has taken a deep interest in this question and studied it carefully, is of the same opinion. There is no man who knows more about crofters than the hon. Gentleman. The Crofter Commission takes £6 as the limit; the hon. Member for Inverness-shire was unable to differ with them in their principle; but, feeling that the £6 limit would operate with some harshness in the case of many respectable people who might wish to better their position, he fixed the limit at £4, and that is the limit which is now proposed by this Amendment. This Amendment, therefore, gives effect to the views of the Gentleman upon the Crofter Commission who, probably, knows most about the crofters, and gives effect to the views of the whole Commission, though not to the full extent to which the other Members considered it advisable to do so. Now, my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate says—"Oh, but in not putting any limit into our Bill we had in view the possibility of the desirability of a great number of the people who had small crofts continuing to hold them, and by the development of the industry of fishing being able to get on extremely well with their £4 limit." But the right hon. and learned Gentleman forgets that when he drew this Bill and stated no limit in it, there was not a word about fishing in it, from beginning to end, and that it was only the pressure put upon the Government from this side of the House which led to fishing being included at all.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I would not interrupt the right hon. and learned Gentleman except upon a distinct matter of fact. I may say, with the most absolute assurance, that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is quite mistaken on this point. It is a fact, and I state it as one who knows the fact, that before this Bill was put upon the Table of the House, it was arranged that there should be a Fishing Clause.

Mr. J. H A. MACDONALD: Exactly, Sir; the Government had not been able, up to the time when this Bill was completely drafted and handed to the Members of the House, to get the Gentlemen who represent the Treasury upon that Bench to allow them to put in clauses relating to fishing. I think that is a perfectly intelligible and correct statement of the situation. Again, Sir, the Lord Advocate forgets that in the latter part of his speech he made statements which were to a great extent inconsistent with themselves. In the first place, the right hon. and learned Gentleman said it would be a great advantage that these people who are to develop the fishing industry, should have their small holdings. But does he think, and does any hon. Member of this House think, that if you place crofters who practically may be paying only 25*s.* or 30*s.* as rent, in the position of getting grazing land, and bring up their crofts to the value of a £15 rent, it would tend to the development of the fishing industry? I venture to think it would do nothing of the kind, and I am sure those Members of the Committee who look at the matter from a common sense point of view will come to the same conclusion as myself. The right hon. and learned Gentleman stated no reason, and has given no explanation whatever, why he differs from the opinion of the Crofter Commission; but, I think we are entitled, before this Amendment is disposed of, to have from the Government some intelligible and intelligent reason why the reasons which were given by the Crofter Commission are to be set aside, and why we are to act in absolute defiance of the opinion expressed by the Commission and by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh). If any reasons can be given to satisfy a reasonable mind that the Crofter Commission was wrong and that the opinion which they gave was incorrect, and if the Members of the Government can persuade the hon. Gentleman the Member for Inverness-shire that he was wrong in the view he took upon the Commission, there would be no occasion whatever to press this Amendment; but to give reasons which do not touch the reasons given by the Crofter Commission, which in no way overcome them, and then to ask this Committee to vote against the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Campbell) is, to say the least, unreasonable on the part of Her Majesty's Government. Give us a reason to show that the Crofter Commission was wrong, and there will be an end of the controversy; but, if that reason is not to be given, I think we ought to divide.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. ASHER) (Elgin, &c.): There is no doubt, Sir, that in this particular the Government have deviated from the recommendations of the Royal Commission; but I need scarcely say that it is not the function of a Royal Commission to prescribe to any Government what the particular provisions of any Bill introduced by the Government shall be. The function of a Royal Commission is to investigate and to report, so as to enable the Government to determine on their own responsibility what should be the provisions, in the form of a Bill, which they should submit to the House for adoption. Now, my right hon. and learned Friend the late Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) says that no reason which is intelligible to an ordinary mind can be given, so far as he can see, for the course which the Government have taken in this matter. If my right hon. and learned Friend will give me his attention for a very few seconds, I will give one or two reasons which ought to satisfy any reasonable mind that the course the Government have chosen to pursue is the proper one. The statistics which have just been quoted, have disclosed to the Committee that the proportion in which the crofters whose holdings are less than £4 a-year stand relatively to those above, is something like 2,000 as against 500. [An hon. MEMBER: No; £6.]

DR. CLARK: I quoted the figures from the Report of the Royal Commission. In Sutherland there are 1,966 crofters whose holdings are below £4 a-year, and 548 whose holdings are above £4 a-year. Hon. Members can verify the figures by turning to the pages of the Commissioners' Report.

MR. ASHER: Those figures were quite in accordance with my own examination of the Report, and they have a most important bearing upon the present question. It is a fact that there are about four crofters whose holdings are rented below £4 a-year to every one crofter whose holding is rented above that figure. We cannot get rid of that fact. There the people are, living partly by agriculture and partly by fishing. What is to be done with them? This measure is introduced for the purpose of dealing with the grievances which the people of the Highlands have. The people who are engaged in the industry of agriculture are in the occupation of holdings so small that they are not able to make a living for themselves. Are you to pass an Act which is to exclude from its scope four-fifths of the people suffering from the grievances which you are endeavouring to remedy? I quite admit that it is a great misfortune that there should be so many people located there upon such very small holdings; but surely it is not a reasonable proceeding to pass a measure which, amongst other provisions, contains machinery for enlarging holdings, and yet not allow that measure to be applicable to the class of holdings which stands most in need of it. There is a very marked distinction between this proposal and that which was negatived in the last division. What the Government have done by including all crofters has not been to extend the Bill to those who are not at present engaged in the industry of agriculture, but simply to extend it to all persons who are at present engaged in that industry, and who are partly dependent upon it. The reason why the Bill is made applicable to them is that they are really the class who stand most in need of the remedy, and the Government do not see why the remedy should not be made applicable to them.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I will not detain the Committee more than a few minutes. I confess I have never been very greatly enamoured of this Amendment, and certainly the arguments which have been adduced by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark)—and his figures, I understand, are admittedly correct—would undoubtedly weigh with me very greatly. On the other hand, I have always been largely influenced by the Report of the Royal Commission—a Report produced by Gentlemen who gave great thought and trouble to the consideration of this question; and I have in my hand at this moment an opinion which was expressed at the time the Report was made by one Member of the Commission, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh). What the hon. Gentleman said is this—

> "The figure of £4 would in my opinion be, though high enough, a fair one, and, having been recognized by the Valuation Act of 1854, has a distinct significance."

Now, Sir, I think the Committee would be glad to know what is the opinion of the hon. Gentleman now. Does he adhere to the opinion he then expressed, and, if not, will he be kind enough to state to the Committee what are the circumstances which have induced him to alter his opinion? I must confess that, after all the consideration the hon. Gentleman has given to the Crofter Question, the opinion which he may express will largely influence me in the vote I give.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): It is quite true that on the Royal Commission I thought the limit of £4 a proper and reasonable one; but that figure referred to an improving lease which the Commission recommended. As that recommendation has not been taken up by the Government, I think myself quite at liberty now to approve, as I do thoroughly, of the proposal of the Government not to set up a limit.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) hoped the Government would not accept the Amendment.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I rise, Mr. Courtney, to make a suggestion to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, who must feel that my hon. Friend (Mr. J. A. Campbell), in asking the Committee to consider the suggestion made by that responsible body, the Crofter Commission, has done good service to the discussion of this Bill. I understand the case of the Government to be this. They admit fully that there are districts in the Highlands where it is unfortunate these people, having very small tenements, should be congested; but they point out, on the other hand, which I quite admit, that there are parts of the Highlands where a man with a croft as small as £4, or £3, or £2, may make an adequate and substantial living, either by fishing or some other industry he can pursue in his neighbourhood. Therefore, it would appear, by the confession of the Government, that there are two distinct classes of crofters having holdings below £4, one a class which exists where no adequate employment can be found, and the other a class existing near good fishing, or where adequate employment either exists now or will exist when the fishing provisions proposed by the Government become law; and I would ask the Government whether they could not, between this and Report, consider the possibility of giving to the Land Commission some power of drawing a distinction between these two classes, while I should recommend strongly that under no circumstances should the total amount of land in the possession of the crofter community be diminished by one iota, or that one fragment should be added to a sheep farm or deer forest. I think, in the interest of the crofters themselves, crofts should be consolidated in certain parts of the Highlands—surely it would be for the benefit of the crofters that the very small crofts should be gradually diminished in number and the remaining crofts increased in size. Probably my hon. Friend (Mr. J. A. Campbell) will not think it worth while to put the Committee to the trouble of a division on this subject; but I trust the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will consider between this and Report proposals which, whether practical or not, he will see are founded upon a rational view of the wants and necessities of the Highland people.

MR. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): I hope that the Government will consider seriously the suggestion that has now been made. The Lord Advocate said that the adoption of a £4 limit would exclude nine-tenths of the crofters from any enjoyment of the benefits of the Bill. Now, he has made a mistake. I have the figures with me, and I find that instead of nine-tenths there are not five-tenths who would be prejudicially affected by the adoption of the present Amendment. The Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Asher) says that four-fifths of the crofter population would be precluded from sharing in the benefits of the Bill; but he is equally mistaken. If the hon. and learned Gentlemen will look at the Return of the number of occupiers in Scotland, they will find that what I state is quite correct.

Amendment *negatived.*

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Mr. Courtney, I propose to omit the word "no," in line 12 of this clause, in order to make the line run "but he shall have power to assign his tenancy." The right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan), in introducing the Bill, said there was no historical right in the Highlands of Scotland to free sale, such as existed in Ireland. Now, the Ulster tenant right was originally limited to Ulster; but by the Irish Land Act Parliament extended the principle of free sale to the other three Provinces of the country. I think that practically, at the present time, the Ulster tenant right does exist in the Highlands of Scotland, because in a number of counties when a tenant leaves his farm he has a right of sale, and he does receive some payment. The incoming tenant not only pays something for the tenant right, but he takes upon himself the liabilities of his predecessor in the farm as well. I have not heard any argument against granting the right of assignment. Why should a crofter under the new conditions not have the same right that cottiers have in Ireland? Why should they not have the same right as a feuar had in selling his feu? If a crofter and a landlord become partners, the one giving land and the other giving his labour and capital, why should the crofter not have as much right to sell his capital and labour as a landlord has to sell his portion of the partnership? I should like to hear from right hon. Gentlemen something more than the statement that, historically, crofters have no right of sale. As a matter of right, as a matter of usage, the Ulster custom exists in the Highlands at the present time. The great bulk of the crofters, when they leave their farms, have the right to sell their holdings, and they do sell them. Now, the objection to my Amendment is that under the Compensation Clause crofters will have compensation for their improvements. But it seems to me they can receive no adequate or full compensation except they get the market price. Compensation for improvements simply means the getting from the landlord the price that one individual will give for the improvements; full compensation means selling the article and getting its full market value. I do not think a landlord would like to have his right of sale limited, and, if so, why should a crofter's right of sale be limited? It is time that the rights of those who hold personal property should be considered quite as much as the rights of those who hold real property. If men want to prevent the development of Socialism, let them stop the system of confiscating the property of others, and place all property in the same position. If they do that, perhaps they may prevent the growth of Socialism; but as long as they keep up the unjust privileges of the great as against the small, they will only aid and abet the development of Socialism.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 12, to leave out the word "no."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'no' stand part of the Clause."

MR. ASHER: This is a very important Amendment; but after the best consideration which the Government have been able to give to it, they have felt it their duty not to accept it, and I shall endeavour to state in a few words the grounds upon which we have come to that determination. There is no doubt that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) has proposed this Amendment in what he believes to be the interest of the crofters. Well, he will perhaps be surprised to hear that the Government oppose the Amendment in the interest of the crofters; we oppose it because we believe that its operation would be prejudicial instead of favourable to the crofters. This Amendment only takes effect when a crofter is about to leave his holding. It is proposed by the hon. Gentleman that a crofter who intends to surrender his holding in order to leave the locality or to adopt some other industry should have the option of selling his improvements as tenant right, as an alternative to adopting the remedies given him under the Bill. Now, what are the remedies of a crofter who has either to remove or to renounce his tenancy? Under the Bill, as it stands, he is entitled to be compensated for all his permanent improvements, receiving such sum as the Land Commission considers the proper value of the improvements; and the improvements are to be valued upon the principle of what they are worth to the incoming tenant. Now, my hon. Friend (Dr. Clark) must contemplate that the crofter would get something more by the operation of the Amendment he proposes. Now, what is that something more? It is that he should be paid upon leaving his holding something by the crofter who is coming in, something which is in excess of what the Land Commission would consider the fair value of the permanent improvements. Now, what would be the effect of that? One of the objects of this Bill is that all persons who are in the position of crofters should occupy their holdings at a fair rent. If a crofter had the right to sell his tenant right, and if by such a sale he got something more for it than the Land Commission considered its fair value, the result would be that the incoming crofter would have to pay for the privilege of getting possession of the croft, not only the fair rent fixed, but a premium for the tenant right. The consequence is that while, on the one hand, you are by this Bill proposing to establish a system, and a perfect system, which will secure that the crofters in the occupation of holdings shall sit at a fair rent; by the adoption of the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Dr. Clark)—an Amendment proposed upon the assumption that the crofter going out will get something more than he gets under the Bill—the incoming tenant would be deprived of some of the benefit which he would have if he came in under the procedure proposed by the Bill. ["No."] I hear someone say "No;" but if this Amendment is not to give the outgoing crofter more than he can get under the Bill, what is the object of it? [Dr. CLARK: It is to prevent the landlord getting it.] The Bill at present secures to the crofter full compensation for all improvements which he is leaving behind him, estimated by the Land Commission on the principle of the value of the improvements to the incoming tenant. If this Amendment is not proposed for the purpose of giving the outgoing crofter something more than the Bill gives, I cannot understand its purpose. And if the outgoing tenant is to get something more he must get it at the expense of the incoming tenant; and, therefore, this Amendment would have the effect of loading the incoming tenant with a disadvantage with which he would not be loaded if the Bill passed in its present form. In short, by the Bill as it at present stands, we give the existing crofter the right of occupation at a fair rent; but by the Amendment we would do much to seriously disturb the fairness of the rent. It is upon these grounds which, upon due consideration, have appeared to us to be important grounds in the interest of the crofter community, that we have come to the conclusion that we are not able to accept this Amendment.

Viscount LYMINGTON (Devon, South Molton): I have an Amendment on the Paper further down; but I confess I had a good deal of diffidence in framing it on the ground, as alleged by the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan), that there is no historical argument in favour of free sale as regards the crofters of Scotland. But that argument has been entirely thrown to the wind by the Government, and they oppose the Amendment of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) upon precisely the same ground as hon. Members opposite opposed free sale in the Irish Land Act, and the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Asher) has practically used precisely the same arguments which were used against the Land Act, though he voted for that Act. It seems to me that the Government are taking up a very illogical position in this matter. They do not say that free sale is unknown in the Highlands; but they themselves profess to be better judges of the advantages to the crofters than some of the hon. Gentlemen who represent the crofters in this House. I must say that that seems to me a presumption which this House is not bound to accept. I still hold, as I held when the Land Act was passing through the House, that there is nothing in free sale which is really unfair to the landlord. I do not express merely my own opinion, but I would refer hon. Members to the evidence given before the Commission upon the Irish Land Question. In that evidence they will find the statement, again and again repeated by such high authorities as Lord Downshire's agent, The O'Conor Don, and Mr. Kavanagh, that free sale would not have the injurious effect the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Asher) supposes it would have. On the other hand, it seems to me that there is a great deal to be said in its favour. In the first place, it gets rid of the Compensation Clause, to which I am bound to say I have a great dislike. What are you going to compensate the crofter for, and how are you going to arrive at a fair estimate of the amount and extent of his improvements? Free sale, to put the matter succintly, appears to have these advantages for the landlord—it limits the value of the tenant right to a matter of fact and not to a matter of opinion, it offers a security for the repayment of arrears of rent, the tenant has an interest in keeping and leaving his farm in good order, and, above all, it enables a landlord to get rid without any difficulty, without any friction, of a crofter, and it affords a landlord a natural means of consolidating the holdings. For these reasons, which I have stated before in this House, reasons which at the time I stated them prevailed in the minds of the Government, I shall certainly go into the Lobby with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark).

Mr. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead): If I have read the Bill aright, its object is to root to the soil the crofters who at present occupy the land, and to give them not only compensation for their improvements but benefits beyond that—there are contingent rights secured to the crofters. Well, now, by this Amendment it is contemplated that the crofters shall have the benefit not only of selling the rights to their improvements, but of selling the contingent rights which are secured to them by this Bill. I cannot conceive anything which would be more likely to stimulate the sale of crofts and contingent rights than a provision of this kind, because the men would go into the market not only to dispose of the land they occupied, but the contingent rights which are guaranteed by this Bill. But it would have this further operation, as I understand, that not only the crofters, but the assignees of the crofters, would have the privilege of exercising the rights which are guaranteed by the Bill—not only the crofters themselves, not only the persons you contemplate benefiting, but those who have made speculative purchases would have the right to go for the increase of their holdings, and for the other advantages guaranteed under the Bill. Instead, therefore, of securing the crofters in their holdings, you would be inducing them to speculate in their holdings and contingent rights, you would bring in a class of purchasers who are totally unconnected with the crofts of the Highlands, and whom you never wished should profit by the Bill. It seems to me that the adoption of this Amendment would lead to an entire perversion of the Bill, and to the benefit of those who are in no way the object of your bounty.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): Whatever may be said theoretically as to the merits of free sale, I think that, when upon this Bill a proposal is made to introduce the peculiar feature of the Irish land system into the tenure of Scotland, we ought to consider the practical effects of free sale in Ireland. Now, free sale arose from an unfortunate state of affairs in Ulster, by which there was a dual proprietorship of the land. In process of time the tenants of the other parts of Ireland claimed the right of free sale, and it was conceded to them. What has been the effect of free sale in other parts of Ireland? I must, first of all, make this general statement, that a tenant has a right in justice to compensation for all his own improvements; but he has no right to anything else. Well, the result of free sale in Ireland has been that tenant right is sold at such a price to the incoming tenant that he is deprived of all the capital which ought to aid him in stocking the land and raising the condition of agriculture. This is the simple reason why agriculture is more backward in Ireland than in any other country in Europe. You find that tenant right in Ireland means 10, 20, or 30 years' purchase. If a man who, perhaps by legacy, or by his industry in America or some other country, accumulates a little money, buys a wretched holding for the purpose of coming back to his native land, he gives a price for it which renders it absolutely impossible for him to reap any advantage from the purchase; and the end of it all is that we have now, staring us in the face, this Irish Land Question, which is going to rend the Empire asunder. These are simple facts. [*Laughter.*] I know that hon. Gentlemen opposite look upon this matter with something akin to amusement; but I look upon it with very serious concern. As I have said, agriculture in Ireland is more backward than in any other country in Europe, while rents in Ireland are lower than those in any other country. [*Laughter.*] By laughing, hon. Members only show their ignorance of the subject. The rent which is paid to the landlord in Ireland is less than that paid in England or Scotland, or upon the Continent; but the amount which is paid by the interest on the money the tenant has expended in purchasing out the former holder, raises the rent to such an extent that it is impossible for a man to reap any advantage from his holding. I will be no party to introducing into Scotland that principle of free sale which has been so unfortunate in its results in Ireland. Tenant right worked very well in Ulster for a number of years; but now you see the consequences. In the present depressed times no rent is paid at all, and the argument is that the tenant cannot get his rent out of the land. There is no reason why tenants in Scotland should have any claim for other rights not given under this Bill. The Bill gives the tenant fixity of rent for the statutable period of 15 years, which is given in the Irish Land Act. What right has a tenant to anything more, if he leaves his holding, than the value of his own improvements? Any other capital ought to be carefully preserved to the incoming tenant, that he may stock his holding and work it properly. For these reasons I shall certainly oppose the Amendment.

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I have a very good reason why landlords and factors and Members of this Liberal Government are anxious to retain this clause in a form different from that which it would assume if the Amendment of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) were accepted. It is because in times past these landlords and factors have appropriated tenants' improvements at less than their real worth at the time being, and up till 1883 for nothing at all. I know that this is the case as a practical man. I have had experience of almost all sorts of land tenure and ownership; and I say, from experience, that the reason the landowners want the clause in its present form is that they may get the improvements at less than their worth.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I understood the last speaker but one to urge that free sale hinders land cultivation in Ireland. I have always understood, however, that in Ulster, where free sale has prevailed, the land was in a higher state of cultivation than in any other part of the country.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I would strongly urge this Amendment on the acceptance of the Committee in the interests of the proprietors as well as of the tenants themselves. The hon.

and learned Gentleman (Mr. Asher), who spoke for the Government in opposition to this clause, no doubt had a very nice theory—that the landlord will pay the outgoing tenant for his improvements, and give the incoming tenant the land at the old rent. Well, I put it to the experience of everyone who knows anything about the matter, whether landlords will not exact as high a rent as they can get from incoming tenants? It is far better for the incoming tenant to receive the farm in good condition, and pay for doing so. Has the hon. and learned Gentleman considered how this is going to work out? You are going to entrust the carrying out of the new arrangements to the Land Commission, and to insist upon Commissioners going, it may be, to the Hebrides, to award compensation to the extent of £4 or £5. It is not the fact, as the hon. and learned Gentleman seems to think, that tenants would get more under the system of free sale than they would under this system of compensation. There is all the difference in the world between a man going into the market and getting what he can for his holding, and his submitting to a price fixed by another person. It is very possible that in a great many cases the compensation the tenant would expect from the landlord would be a considerable sum, whilst the benefit to the landlord would be *nil*. Is the tenant to be compensated for a house that the landlord may desire to pull down as soon as the tenant goes out of it? I maintain that free sale would be quite as much in the interest of the landlord as in the interest of the tenant, and I think there will be a far greater chance of consolidating the holdings under a system of free sale than by the mere giving of compensation for improvements. When a man knows that he has a fair rent, and that he can sell his holding when he likes if he is not able to make a living out of his holding, he has no one to blame—he can only blame the climate or the circumstances of the case. When it is brought home to him that he cannot live on his land, very possibly he will go to a neighbour and ask him if he will give him anything for his holding, and the neighbour, if he sees that he can make more out of two holdings than one, will give him something for it. A little practice in this matter is worth any quantity of theory. No one that I have heard, with the single exception, perhaps, of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Mitchell Henry)—who is now no longer politically connected with Ireland—has complained of free sale. I understand that the free sale system has worked satisfactorily to the tenants of Ireland, and until this evening I have not heard that the landlords seriously complain of it. We have a system of compensation in England and Scotland under the Agricultural Holdings Act; but that Act is universally admitted to be a failure. The tenants are not taking advantage of it. There are so many pitfalls about it, and there is so much expense attending upon its operation, that, rather than make claims and provoke counter-claims on the part of the landlords, the tenants are refusing to take advantage of the Act, and the compensation under it is practically a dead letter. After this experience, I appeal to the Committee whether it would not be wiser to be guided by what has taken place in Ireland, where free sale has been successful—where, at least, I have never heard any complaint of it on the part of tenants—than to adopt the system of compensation which has been practised under the Agricultural Holdings Act of England and Scotland, and which has been recognized as a complete failure?

MR. GOSCHEN (Edinburgh, E.): I would interpose but for a few moments on this question. It appears to me that we have not only to think of the sitting tenants, nor only of the landlords, but also of the incoming tenants. We have to consider not only how we are to deal with present undoubted difficulties, but to see that we may not very soon arrive at a similar difficulty afterwards; and, looking at it from that point of view, I think we cannot leave entirely out of sight that free sale means a higher rent and a rack rent to the next tenant. Is that disputed or not? [Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: Yes.] It is disputed. How is it disputed? I say that the sale is made at the highest price that the market will give. The sitting tenant takes his holding and his rights into the market, and he sells at the highest price he can get, and the interest on the price he receives for his holding is added to the rent which the new tenant has to pay, and the two together then form the new rent of the holding, and on that hypothesis the new rent is more than the fair rent which a Judicial Court has said could be properly paid. It seems to me, therefore, that the giving of this free right of sale means that the next tenant is to hold his holding at a rent, which, through the interest upon the capital he has paid to the outgoing tenant, has reached an amount which is beyond what the Court declared was fair; and conceding the right of free sale appears to me simply to be handing over to the existing tenants the opportunity of selling the privileges conferred on them by the Act when it becomes law, while the future race of tenants will be in no better position than the present ones in respect of the high rents which they will have to pay. I would only add one further consideration to what I have urged, and it is this. I understand that the argument which is to induce us to pass this Bill is, in the main, that the crofters are to have restored to them privileges from which they have been ousted in the course of years. It is on historical grounds we are called upon to pass this legislation, which runs counter to the general legislation of the country. It is because there are special circumstances in the case of the crofters, and because they have special rights; but, under these circumstances, I think we ought to stick as closely as possible to those rights which the crofters enjoyed in past times. I understand, if I am rightly informed, that free sale has not been one of the privileges that crofters have in the past enjoyed. [Mr. J. W. Barclay: Nor fixity of tenure.] If they have not enjoyed fixity of tenure, it is very questionable now how far we are justified in passing this legislation. We are not, as I understand it—though I may be wrong—thinking what is the best form of tenure which we can invent for the Highlands of Scotland; but we have to deal with a difficult case, and with claims which have arisen from the views the crofters have taken of their historical rights; and, approaching it from that point of, view we are anxious to do them justice, and to put them back into the position in which they were, as far as the changed position of affairs will permit. But that is not an argument for conferring new rights upon the crofters; and if the granting of the free sale is a new right, I doubt whether they could claim it according to the general arrangement which will induce us to pass this Bill. But, at the same time, I would rely more strongly upon the argument I urged at the commencement of my observations—that while we shall, no doubt, be conferring an advantage on sitting tenants by giving them certain rights, we shall heighten the difficulty in the future by tempting others to give high prices for the privileges conferred on these people, for such persons will stand in the position of being scarcely able to pay the rent, *plus* the interest, which will fall upon them.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The argument of the right hon. Gentleman is strangely illogical. He wishes to prevent the tenants from having the chance of selling their improvements if they can. The landlord is to be the purchaser, at a price fixed by the Land Commission, and pretty certain not to be as high as would be got in open market. But what will happen when the landlord purchases the improvements? The landlord can sell them for any price he likes to the incoming tenant; and I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman that the future tenant will not have the advantages which it is the main object of this Bill to provide. Besides that, the landlord could get any price he liked to charge and he thought he could get from the incoming tenant. He could subject the incoming tenant to any rent whatsoever. I think the Solicitor General for Scotland is under a misapprehension when he states that the Bill provides that the tenant shall have compensation for his improvements. I say it provides no such thing. Whatever the Land Commission may term "permanent" improvements, he will be compensated for; but those which will only last 10 or 15 years, and therefore will not come under the description "permanent," will be given to the landlord for absolutely nothing. The landlord will be able, as I say, to sell in the highest market to a tenant from whom he can exact any rent he likes.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): The point now raised is a very important one, being whether future tenants are to have the benefit of the Act. If not, what is to prevent the landlords from rack-renting the tenants just the same as heretofore. There is no reason to expect that the landlord will not rack-rent the future tenant. I do not wish to detain the Committee unnecessarily; but there is one important point I should like to refer to. The hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Asher), who defended the clause as it stands, pointed out that the landlord would let the holding on better terms that if he dealt with the waygoing tenant; but there is no reason to believe that that would be the case. The question now raised is whether this Bill is going to be applicable to future tenancies, and a fair rent is going to be fixed for them by the Land Commission, or whether they are to be left to the tender mercies of the landlords in the future as in the past? The point, I repeat, is a very important one. We shall get out of the difficulty altogether if we adopt the principle of free sale; otherwise we shall have to make provision in the Bill for future tenants that they, also, shall be entitled to have fair rents from the landlords.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): There is a special consideration with reference to this matter of free sale *versus* compensation which has been overlooked. It is assumed that under this Bill the tenant will get fair compensation for his improvements. But what are the conditions under which he receives it? They are—and they do not appear in the Irish Land Act—that the improvements be executed or paid for by the crofter or his predecessors in the same family for 30 years. Further, it is stipulated that these improvements shall not be made in virtue of any agreement or understanding expressed in estate regulations or other writings. Now, there is nothing under Heaven that a crofter can do which is not stated in the written conditions. Through these restrictions and by these conditions I look upon this Compensation Clause as a perfect delusion. It may be that scarcely any crofter will derive benefit from it. I was surprised to notice the solicitude of the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Asher) for the incoming tenant at the expense of the outgoing tenant. He does not wish the outgoing tenant to sell his holding for what it is worth, because it will be too expensive for the incoming tenant—for that is what it amounts to. He will have it valued by the Land Commission for less than it is worth, and then will give it to the landlord, who will sell it for all that it is worth. Then, another clause to be put in the Bill is one which recognizes the right of the crofter to some property in his holding, for he is to have the right to bequeath it. The power to make a testamentary disposition means that he has property to bequeath. Well, if I have the right to bequeath my property I ought to have the right to sell it. The difference is this—If I have the right to sell it I can enjoy some of the advantages during life; but if I have only the power to bequeath I must die in order to get the advantage of it. That is a provision in the Bill, and it seems to me a most illogical position for the Government to take up. It is too late for Her Majesty's Government—represented, as they are, by right hon. Gentlemen who, in this House, on the Irish Land Bill, fought for weeks and months for this principle we advocate, though they are now fighting against it—it is too late for them to talk about free sale as if it were a new principle. It is an old principle that is now sought to be applied to a new spot. I do not believe that the adoption of the principle will produce a rupture of the British Empire. The tenant has a right to get a market value for improvements. An Amendment will come on later to test the question as to whether this should be made a family matter or not, and if the hon. Gentleman now goes to a division I shall support him. I would ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate to clear up the question as to future tenants. There is nothing in this Bill corresponding to the wording of the Irish Land Act; and there has been nothing to show why the person purchasing a crofter's holding should not be placed in the same position as the crofter as to fixity of tenure.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): There is nothing of the sort, because the Bill does not recognize such a thing as the purchase of a croft. The whole hypothesis of the Bill is that the tenancy belongs to the crofter and his heirs. By a somewhat beneficent extension of that the Government have proposed to give the power of bequest—that is to say, to select a person from amongst the number of his heirs. But according to the proposal of the Bill we do not give the right beyond the tenant. So that, whatever our demerits may be for resisting the proposal, we have not the demerit of being illogical. The two things stand together. With regard to what has been said as to the present proposal not being a novelty, I suppose novelty has some relation to place. It may not have been novel in Ireland; I think it was not, for there it grew out of the Ulster Custom. I remember, however, even in the case of Ireland, hearing a discussion as to how far the custom might be extended to the other Provinces. In Scotland it is absolutely novel. ["No, no!"] Well, I say it is so; and I should have thought that such a statement might have been made here without fear of contradiction. Our firm belief is that we should be doing a thing most damaging to the tenants of Scotland, viewed as a group and as a whole, if we adopted this principle, because the effect of free sale has often been described to be to kill fair rent. They must stand together. I believe that if we gave the right of free sale we should kill the fair rent to all who afterwards came into possession. I am not much at variance with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay); but I think that some prejudice would be caused by this Amendment. I think that while it is quite right that the tenant should get compensation for all that he has done by way of improvement, if you allow him to sell the future prospects, if I may so say—all the future prospects, and contingencies, and chances appertaining to the tenancy—you would be authorizing him to sell something which does not belong to him, but to the landlord. I rather think it is not so much the landlords as the future tenants who are interested in this matter, although, as I have said, the landlord would be prejudiced by giving present tenants this power of sale. Whether, therefore, we view the matter in the light of principle or precedent—by which I mean precedent in the country with which we are dealing—or in the view of advantage to the landlord and tenant, we feel constrained to resist this proposal.

Mr. J. E. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I am greatly interested in this matter, although I am not a Scotchman. I am particularly anxious that in this matter the crofters should benefit by the experience we had in Ulster under the old Land Act of 1870, at which time compensation was measured by the Courts and was not given in the right of free sale. I can assure the Committee, from my own experience at that time, that the benefits which the Legislature attempted to confer on the Ulster tenants were lost very much because the Act did not give free sale, which the Act of 1881 did. I am speaking now from both professional and personal knowledge. I also know that that which my hon. Friend near me (Mr. Chance) has mentioned as possible to occur really did occur. The compensation awarded by the Court was defeated by the lease given by the landlord to the incoming tenant. The right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) seems to be under a mistake with regard to what is actually meant by fair rent in the Land Courts. It is intended to cover only the landlord's interest in a holding. If it means anything, it really means to give the landlord a fair return for his interest in the soil; but I fail to see how it can be rack-renting, or how the incoming tenant is in any way injured, if he finds that the previous tenant has added something which, in his judgment, is something of value. He ceases to be a rack-rented tenant, for he has got something more than his farm.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has not answered my question.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: The hon. Member did ask me a question, and I had meant to answer it, but forgot to do so. As the hon. Member will see, on reference to the last part of Section 16 on the top of page 8, the Bill has clearly defined the application of the matter. It says—

> "Within the parishes to which this Act is determined to apply as aforesaid, this Act shall apply to every crofter who is the tenant of a holding at the passing of this Act, and to his heirs, in the same manner as if the tenancy were a lease;"

that is to say, to all existing crofters, and to all who derive their crofts by descent—all those who are in the position of possessing that which we assume will be a historical status. If the hon. Member asks me what is to be the position of future crofters, thereby meaning crofters who after this time make contracts, I say that, undoubtedly, the Bill will not apply to such persons, and for this reason—which we shall have a full opportunity of discussing when we come to the clause—that then we shall be dealing with persons who are not in historical status, but who are like anybody else who makes a bargain which may be a good or a bad arrangement.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I must press my Amendment, because the Lord Advocate seems to have answered the Solicitor General for Scotland. The Solicitor General for Scotland told us that we should be rack-renting the future tenants, and now we are told that the future tenants will be rack-rented by the landlords, and that, under Clause 5, the outgoing crofter will have only a portion of his improvements coming under the cognizance of the Court and being recognized, and that then an agreement shall be entered into by the incoming tenant, and the landlord shall exact all the difference between what he pays and a rack-rent. If the hon. and learned Member would so change the clause as to prevent the rack-renting of the incoming tenant I would gladly withdraw my Amendment. I make my proposal in order to prevent the landlord from confiscating a certain portion of the improvements made by the tenant, and also getting the difference between the value of the land to one man and the value of the improvements to the other one. If you could, by a further clause, prevent the rack-renting of the future tenant, then I would withdraw; but as, under this section of the Bill, all new crofters coming in will require to enter into agreements with the landlords, and as future tenants will not have the benefit of the Act, I shall press my Amendment, in order to prevent the crofters' improvements being confiscated, and to prevent legal stealing.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 248; Noes 112: Majority 136.—(Div. List, No. 50.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I hope the hon. Member will not persevere with this Motion. I think we have now got to a stage at which, after the settlement which has taken place of important questions of principle, considerable progress can be made.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I proposed Progress because there is no other question of importance within a measurable distance. After the work we have done, and considering the hour, I do not think it unreasonable that Progress should be reported.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Perhaps the best plan will be to go on until we come to some important point, and then, I trust, the Government will agree to report Progress.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): The next Amendment, which stands in my name, is probably unnecessary after the divisions which have taken place. But the next Amendment is of a different kind. I propose to make it clear that the non-payment of arrears of rent which have accumulated for a period exceeding one year before the passing of the Act shall not constitute a breach of the statutory conditions. Am I right in supposing that rent accruing as I have described will not be a breach of the statutory conditions? If I am right in supposing that is the intention of Her Majesty's Government I will not propose the Amendment; but as the right hon. and learned Gentleman does not give me that information I beg to move the Amendment in order to get an explanation.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 14, sub-section (1), at end, insert "but non-payment of arrears of rent accumulated for a period exceeding one year before the passing of this Act shall not be a breach of the statutory conditions." — (*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I must say that the existence of arrears was not considered in strictness to be a breach of statutory conditions. In dealing with the question of arrears, Her Majesty's Government propose to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear), subject to the judgment of the Committee. It is our opinion that there should be some provision in the Bill which deals with arrears.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): The reason for adopting the Amendment I am about to move is obvious. It is only fair that a man who occupies land should have the capital for stocking it; otherwise the land can be of no possible use to him, and it must suffer from a condition of things opposed to good cultivation.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, after sub-section (1), insert—"The crofter shall always keep his holding sufficiently stocked."—(*Mr. Mark Stewart.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I am afraid that this is an Amendment which we cannot accept. It is of the essence of any provisions which are penal, or almost penal, that they should be absolutely clear. It will be noticed that the provisions which we make statutory are of such a character that anyone may know whether or not he is violating them; but the question of sufficient stocking is one of judgment, and there may be differences of opinion, perfectly *bonâ fide*, on the subject. I point out that the tenure of a crofter, or any other tenant, may be put an end to from other causes if he persists in keeping his land unstocked.

MAJOR SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I do not think there is any necessity for a more clear definition of sufficient stocking than we have. I believe that a leading Member of the Liberal Party has decided that one cow is requisite for three acres of land.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 15, to leave out the words "execute any deed purporting to," and insert the words "directly or indirectly."—(*Mr. Kimber.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: It seems to me that any clause of this nature should be absolutely clear and unequivocal; and that end would not be gained by inserting the words "directly or indirectly" in place of those now in the clause.

MR. KIMBER: If one man gives up peaceable possession, and another man gets it, it seems to me that it is about as clear a transfer of possession as can be. There is nothing in the Bill to show that the landlord has the right to resume possession as against a stranger who has been let in; and there is nothing to define the relations between the new tenant and the landlord. Therefore, I submit that there is a case for an amendment of the Bill if you confine the assignment to transfer by deed. I am not well acquainted with the law of Scotland. In England, no doubt, an agreement for tenancy for more than three years would not be binding without a deed; but for a shorter period it can be binding without any deed being executed. I should like to know whether in Scotland the transfer could not be effected without any deed at all?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: By the law of Scotland the assignment could not be made without writing. The position of the landlord would be very simple—he can get a summary ejectment order against the tenant under the circumstances referred to.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 23, to leave out the words "without the consent of the landlord in writing."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I think it is much too strong an interference with the joint act of landlord and tenant to say that even when they are agreed as to a particular thing being done it shall not be done. I may point out it is not merely the question of sub-division which will be affected, but sub-letting the same or any part, or erecting houses or other buildings. Neither of these things could be done, although the two persons interested in the holdings were agreed as to the desirability of its being done. That would be absolutely taking the management of the land out of the hands of both landlord and tenant. The words, "without the consent of the landlord in writing," are in a similar clause of the Irish Land Act.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I think it is much better that, instead of the consent of the landlord, there should be the consent of the Land Commission. To provide for this, I beg to move to leave out of line 23 the words "of his landlord."

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 23, to leave out the words "of his landlord."—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR was understood to oppose the Amendment.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Mr. Courtney, this is an important question. One of the great evils in the Highlands is the sub-division of crofts; and I think it would be a source of great disappointment if, while the Land Commission were endeavouring to put matters right in the Highlands, certain landlords should agree for a consideration to sub-divide holdings which it would be very improper to sub-divide. I withdrew the previous Amendment, because I thought it was, perhaps, too strong; but I really do not see in what way the Land Commission could be more usefully employed than in preventing the sub-division of holdings. I urge upon the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate the consideration of the desirability of leaving this question to the Land Commission. It is very necessary they should exercise their influence in consolidating holdings, instead of sub-dividing them.

Amendment *negatived.*

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I propose to insert after "landlord," in line 23, "or of the Land Commissioners." This is an Amendment rather in an opposite direction to the one just disposed of; it is to prevent a landlord making a sub-division upon his own sole and individual authority. The sub-division must be approved of either by the landlord or the Land Commissioners.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 23, after the word "landlord," to insert the words "or of the Land Commissioners."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I cannot assent to this Amendment, because it gives an alternative course which is not very desirable.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. BAIRD (Lanark, N.W.): I have an Amendment to propose in line 25, an Amendment which I think is absolutely in consonance with the spirit of the Bill, and, therefore, will not meet with the opposition of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate. We have already heard to-night something of the great evil of sub-division of holdings or squatting; and it is with the intention of strengthening this Bill in its provision against squatting that I propose this Amendment. After the word "thereof," in line 25, I propose to insert—

> "Or allow any building, or land being part of the holding, to be occupied by any other than himself."

This Amendment is simply to prevent the introduction of that thin end of the wedge which eventuates in squatting.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 25, after the word "thereof," to insert the words, "or allow any building, or land being part of the holding, to be occupied by any other than himself."—(*Mr. Baird.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I am afraid the hon. Gentleman wishes to reduce the crofter to a most unenviable solitude. It does appear to us that when we have provided that no other dwelling-house is to be erected upon the holding, it would be rather too dictatorial for us to say how many persons the crofter is to have in the dwelling house. This Amendment might prevent him taking a lodger, or establishing other relations. The hon. Member's words are, "or allow any building . . . . to be occupied by any other than himself." We have prohibited such tenants, and we have prohibited the building of fresh dwelling houses; it, therefore, does seem to me to amount to a great interference with possible legitimate rights to say that a crofter shall not take, for instance, a lodger.

MR. BAIRD: My Amendment was simply intended to guard against a kind of sub-tenancy which may arise, and which seems not to be altogether covered by the provisions of the Bill. It is quite conceivable that the sons of the crofter, as they grow up, may wish to keep up an interest in their father's holding, and that this may lead to sub-division.

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey): I do not quite understand what the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Baird) means by "the thin end of the wedge which eventuates in squatting." It seems to me very like sitting down on a tenpenny nail.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I do not know whether the words of the Amendment are the best that can be found; but of this I am quite sure—the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Baird) has pointed out what every man in the House knows to be a real evil and danger. A crofter's son-in-law, for instance, without being properly a sub-tenant, might live upon the holding, and thereby get a share of the holding. Whether my hon. Friend's words are exactly calculated to meet the difficulty I will not say; but I think the Lord Advocate will not deny that the danger is great. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman will promise to consider the matter by Report, I imagine my hon. Friend will be quite satisfied.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): Perhaps the Committee will allow me to suggest words which may meet the difficulty. After the word "thereof," in line 25, I think it would be well to insert the words "or part with possession thereof." Sub-letting is certainly not sufficiently guarded against by the words of the Bill as they at present stand. Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman will take my suggestion into consideration.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I will consider the matter by Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): I propose to insert after the word "house," in line 26, the words "or offices." We have guarded against a tenant erecting a dwelling house without the consent of the landlord. It seems to me there is the same reason why we should prevent the erection of offices.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 26, after the word "house," to insert the words "or offices."—(*Mr. J. A. Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Baird

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): It would be a great misfortune if this Amendment were accepted. By prohibiting the erection of any dwelling house we think we have done all that is necessary to prevent the great evil of sub-division, or of sub-tenancy. But, although we wish to prevent the erection of any dwelling house, we do not, in the least, desire to discourage the improvement of the offices which are necessary for the equipment or the cultivation of the holding. This Amendment would prevent a man who is a fisherman erecting a shed in which to dry or store his nets, or it would prevent a crofter erecting a cow house, or any place for his hay. All the reasons which are against the addition of a dwelling house rather go the other way on this question.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): Half-an-hour ago I understood that when we came to a contentious question we would report Progress. I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will not consider the Amendment I now have to propose too serious a one to accept. My Amendment is to leave out Sub-section (5). There is a good deal of unnecessary phraseology about this sub-section which I do not understand; and I beg to move the omission in order to obtain an explanation.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, to leave out sub-section (5).—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question proposed, "That the sub-section stand part of the Clause."

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I can only explain that the phraseology of this sub-section, translated into plain English, means the committal of an act of bankruptcy. I fancy that there can be no doubt that, in almost every well-drawn lease, there is a provision to this effect; and, besides, that there is a distinctly analogous provision in the Irish Land Act of 1881. I believe the words in the Land Act are "commit an act of bankruptcy;" the meaning, however, is the same.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I beg leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will now consent to report Progress.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Let us pass the clause.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 9, after the words "that is to say," insert "for feuing and letting for building, for the granting of allotments for fishermen, and for harbours, boat shelters, or other buildings connected with the fishing industry."—(*Mr. Mark Stewart.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I can hardly think this Amendment is necessary, because the very same thing is provided for by us in the next clause, which we call the clause of resumption. The way in which the landlord would get the land for feuing or other purpose is by exercising the power of resumption. It would hardly be appropriate to provide in this clause that a landlord should go on the land for the purpose of doing these things. This clause defines the purposes for which the landlord may go upon the land while it is in the tenancy of the crofter. Before he can go upon the land for "feuing or letting for building" he must resume the land. If there is anything which is not covered by the clause of resumption we shall be glad to amend the clause accordingly.

MR. MARK STEWART: It struck me there was no provision for the landlord to enter upon the land under these conditions. I cannot see any objection to the insertion of these words; they only make it clear for what purpose the landlord may go on the land.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: It does not seem to us appropriate to put the proposed words in this clause. Independently of that, I may point out that it would scarcely be safe, without providing for some recourse to the Land Commission, that, the landlord should have the power of totally annihilating the holding for feuing or letting for building on ground allotments. He might let the whole place to the detriment of the occupying crofter, and the advantage of somebody else. While being fully alive to the fact that it is very desirable to provide for what the hon. Gentleman desires, it appears to us that the right way to do it is to give power of resumption for these specified purposes subject to the consent of the Land Commission.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. T. Blake.*)

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I should think that in two minutes we could finish the clause.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will not resist the Motion. I think he is under a misapprehension when he says that in two minutes more we shall be able to finish the clause.

Motion *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday.*

COMMON JURIES REMUNERATION BILL.—[BILL 95.]

(*Mr. Crompton, Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Eugene Wason, Sir John Swinburne, Mr. Johns.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. CROMPTON (Staffordshire, Leek): Mr. Speaker, by this Bill I hope to remove a great injustice which affects a very deserving class of people. Common jurymen take part in the administration of justice gratuitously. They are not only compelled to give their services gratuitously, but they are obliged to pay whatever travelling expenses it is necessary for them to incur; they have to lose much time, and, in addition, have to pay the expenses they are put to while in attendance at an Assize or a Quarter Sessions Court. When they do attend Courts of Assize or of Quarter Sessions they find that there are no conveniences provided for them as a general rule. Sometimes they may be comparatively fortunate enough to secure a seat in the back row of a close Court; and if they are not as fortunate as that they have to remain in one or other of the passages around the Court, it may be in the midst of a set of the good-for-nothing people who very often hang about the passages of our Courts of Justice. And when the time does come for them to take their seat in the jury-box they certainly are not treated in a way people who give their services deserve to be treated. They are kept, perhaps, the whole day investigating very difficult matters, and exercising their minds in a way in which it is very probable they have had no previous experience. And when dinner time comes they are, perhaps, allowed 20 minutes' leave of absence; and if they return, possibly, three or four minutes late they are reprimanded by the Judge, and in some cases fined a sum of money besides. If by any chance they are called upon to try a case of felony and the trial is not finished when the Court rises for the evening they are not allowed to go home, but are locked up, and are not allowed to separate. When the time comes for them to consider their verdict they are locked up, not allowed refreshments, and only allowed the light from a candle. They remain thus locked up for hours sometimes, and many of them are compelled, practically speaking, to give a verdict contrary to their opinion. ["No, no!"] Mr. Speaker, it is necessary that there should be a unanimous verdict; and I believe it constantly happens that the minority give way to the majority. Well, this is the treatment which common jurymen who give their services gratuitously receive. The Bill, the second reading of which I now move, provides that they should have some moderate remuneration for the services they render. Having seen how common jurors are treated in different county towns, I, for my part, would almost prefer to have a week on the treadmill than be compelled to serve for a week as common juryman. Special jurymen are treated in a very different manner. They are placed, whether legally or illegally I need not inquire, upon an entirely separate list, and they have not to try criminal cases, or to mix themselves up with common jurymen—perhaps it would be better for the administration of justice if they had. Now, my Bill only deals with trials at Assizes and Quarter Sessions, and the reason of that is that when men are summoned to attend trials in their own town the hardship of being taken away from their employment is not very great. They can return to their homes at night, and if there is any particular reason why a juror should attend to his work it is more than probable that the presiding officer will give him leave to do so. My Bill, for instance, does not apply to Middlesex or to London; but it proposes that each common juryman who is summoned to attend an Assize or Quarter Session should receive 5*s.* for each day's service, 5*s.* for each night he is away from home, and a reasonable sum for travelling expenses. The remuneration I suggest may by many be considered rather shabby—in fact, I have seen it stated in some papers that it is a very beggarly offer to make. But it seems to me that the farmer or the shopkeeper will not feel he is out of pocket if, when he is called away from home, he is paid 5*s.* for each day's service, 5*s.* for each night, and his reasonable travelling expenses; he will find that he is not being put to any expense, though 10*s.* a-day will not really remunerate him for the loss he has sustained in leaving his business, and for the inconvenience and discomfort he has experienced in having to act as a common juryman. Well, now at Assizes common jurymen have to act in two capacities. They have to act in the trial of civil causes, and they have also to act in the trial of criminals. My Bill provides that the parties to common jury causes should themselves provide a sufficient sum of money to pay for the jurymen. I calculate that five or six causes are tried in the course of a day, and my proposal is that each plaintiff and each defendant should contribute 10*s.* towards the expenses of the juries. In that way a sufficient sum would be provided for the payment of the jurymen engaged in the trial of civil causes. Then, Mr. Speaker, in order to provide for the payment of jurymen trying criminal cases I propose that a certain amount should be found by the Government. It has been put to me more than once whether it would be advisable that the amount payable to the jurymen should be provided out of the rates or out of the monies of Parliament? I will not be a party to any addition to the rates at the present time, at all events until a proper system of rating is introduced. My Bill, therefore, proposes that the money should, practically speaking, be found by Parliament. It is difficult to calculate how much money it will be necessary for Parliament to vote for this purpose; but as far as I have been able to estimate it will be somewhere about £30,000 a-year. This may seem a large amount, but hon. Gentlemen must remember that this

£30,000 a-year represents the amount of money which is taken out of the pockets of the common jurymen, the amount you require them to find in order to discharge their duty in connection with the administration of justice. I may call the attention of the House to one rather important and curious fact, and that is that there is provision made for the payment of the daily expenses of Judges when on Circuit. I believe that £7 7*s.* is given each day to each Judge when on Circuit. Now, if there were two Judges in attendance at an Assize, the amount paid to them for expenses would cover the amount I propose should be paid to the jurymen who try the cases. I think there will be a great deal of sympathy with these common jurors. I hope the House will think that they ought to be remunerated for the time that they give, and be paid the expenses they incur. This Bill provides that justice should be done in this respect, and I beg to move that it be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Crompton.*)

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I look upon this as a most extraordinary Bill, because Clause 2 provides that it is not to extend to Ireland or Scotland, and Clause 6 provides that the money for the payment of the English common jurymen is to be granted by Parliament. I should regard it as a most excellent Bill if it were extended to Ireland. In Ireland we are quite willing that the plaintiffs and defendants should pay 10*s.* each, in order that the jurymen in the country, who are now shockingly treated, should each get 5*s.* a-day. The conditions which surround the lot of a common juror are much worse in Ireland than in England, and any Bill to improve these conditions should be made applicable to Ireland first and to England afterwards. I hope the Government, in answering the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Crompton), who made a speech of very great eloquence, will announce that they are quite ready to extend the provisions of the Bill to Ireland. If the measure is so extended I shall be most happy to vote for it; but if not I shall take great interest in it, and endeavour in Committee to amend every line of it.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): At this late hour (1.10) of the night, I shall not follow my hon. Friend (Mr. Crompton) in the interesting account he has given of the physical and mental disabilities to which common jurymen are subjected. The sting of the hon. Gentleman's speech was emphatically in its tail, and I will bring my remarks to bear upon that sting. He has told us that, practically, he proposes to increase the expenditure of the country by £30,000 a-year. Now, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister explained the other night very clearly what he considered a Constitutional function of the Executive Government—namely, that charges of this sort should be proposed by the responsible Ministers of the Crown and submitted to Parliament in that way. We do not feel disposed to raise a technical objection at this moment—possibly it ought to have been taken at an earlier stage—but I think it is impossible that this Bill can proceed. In the first place, it will be necessary for the House to resolve itself into Committee to pass the required money clause. That cannot be done without the consent of the Government, which consent will certainly not be given. Under these circumstances, I think the hon. Gentleman would do well to withdraw the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Gentleman withdraw the Bill?

MR. CROMPTON: Of course, in this matter I am in the hands of the Government. I do hope that the Government will, at no very distant date, deal with the question of the ——

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman has no right of reply. Does the hon. Gentleman propose to withdraw the Bill?

MR. CROMPTON: Yes, Sir.

Order *discharged;* Bill *withdrawn.*

MARRIAGES (ATTENDANCE OF REGISTRARS) BILL.—[BILL 121.]

(*Sir Richard Webster, Sir Richard Cross, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Baggallay.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): If the House will give me their attention for a few minutes I will put before them the main provisions of this Bill. I shall do so with considerable confidence, because, judging from the suggestions that have been made to me from a great many quarters, all the objections raised to the Bill can be well dealt with in Committee. Hon. Members are aware that at the present time, except in the case of Jews and Quakers and marriages in the Established Church, the attendance of a Registrar is required at marriages, and that by the Acts of 1836 and 1856 certain words have to be said in the presence of the Registrar. Now, for a great many years complaints have been made by Nonconformist Bodies, who have places of worship which are licensed for the solemnization of marriages, concerning this requirement; and I must say that, from the information that has reached me since the time I began to look into this matter, there does seem to me to be in many cases a substantial grievance. There is no doubt whatever that at times marriages have been obliged to be postponed, and that complaints have been made that Religious Bodies do not desire to have present at their services persons who are not in sympathy with the religious ceremony which is being performed. Under these circumstances, I have had to consider, in bringing in this Bill, what was the best way in which this grievance could be met; and I desire to put very briefly before the House the three courses which might have been adopted, and to show why I have taken the course I have adopted. It was suggested in the year 1880 by a Bill brought in by Mr. Blennerhassett, Mr. Errington, and the present Patronage Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arnold Morley), that the grievance might be met by making all the ministers who were ministers of the chapels licensed for the solemnization of marriages, practically speaking, Registrars of Marriages; but I ask the House to consider for a moment what that would lead to. It would lead to an enormous multiplication of register book forms in the various towns; it would lead to very great confusion and inconvenience. I think I may say that not one of the Nonconformist Bodies from whom I have received suggestions has suggested that this course should be resorted to. Another course is to allow marriages to be solemnized by any religious minister, provided the sanction of the Superintendent Registrar or of the District Registrar has been obtained. That, again, is a course which I could not, so far as I was able to form a judgment, suggest, and for this reason—that it is most important there should be some safeguard that marriages are performed by persons who are responsible. Under these circumstances, it occurred to those who have advised with me in this matter that the proper course should be that there should be present a representative minister recognized as being connected, in some way or other, either with the building in which the ceremony takes place, or with the sect according to whose religious ceremony the marriage is solemnized; and that he should be, to a certain extent, responsible for the return to the Registrar General or to the Superintendent Registrar of the certificate of marriage which he would fill up, and which would be signed by him and the parties present as witnesses. Therefore, I have by this Bill proposed that it shall be lawful for any Governing Body desiring that marriages shall be solemnized in their chapels or in their places of worship without the attendance of the Registrar to nominate a minister who shall be able to solemnize marriage without the attendance of the Registrar, and who shall return to the Superintendent Registrar or District Registrar a certificate of the marriage in the form which is in the Schedule to the Bill. I may say at once that to the general principle which I have ventured to embody in the Bill I have, practically, received no serious objection. But it has been suggested—and these points, I think, can be well dealt with in Committee on the Bill—that the Bill does not give sufficient relief to those Religious Bodies who have no ministers permanently attached to their chapels or places of worship, but whose ministers have the superintendence of more than one place of worship. I fully recognize that that class of the community ought also to be considered, and ought to have the benefits of the Bill. I understand that in the case of every such body there is, practically speaking, a safeguard in the recognition of some Governing Body. I shall be willing to bring up a clause to extend the provisions of the Bill to the ministers of such communities, providing those who understand the matter will only assist me in securing the safeguard that we may still have a responsible person present at the marriages. I should have suggested some clause of the kind; but it was a difficult matter for me to deal with, as I, of course, was not thoroughly acquainted with all the rules of the various communities, and I felt such an improvement would be better suggested in Committee by some Member of the House who was well acquainted with the circumstances. It is also suggested that, as I have not provided for the case of vacancies or ministers being absent, I have kept alive the power of the Registrar to attend; but here, again, I am perfectly willing to take care, if I possibly can, that a clause is inserted which will enable a registered minister, though not attached to the chapel, to perform the service in the absence of the particular minister who happens to be registered in respect of the chapel. I think that when the House considers the Bill carefully they will see that, practically, it meets all the objections which may be raised from this point of view. I may add that the Bill will reduce the expenses of marriage at least one-half, and possibly ultimately even still more; and I should also like to mention that a question has been raised as to whether or not I have acted wisely in providing that the forms which I propose should be issued by the Superintendent Registrar—whether it would not be more prudent that they should be issued by the District Registrars of the various places. That is a matter for the decision of those who best understand the working of the matter. Either course will be equally convenient from my point of view, and I shall be only too glad to consider any suggestion made on the subject; if it is thought desirable that it is better that the forms shall be issued by the District Registrar instead of by the Superintendent Registrar I shall be pleased to make the alteration. I am most anxious not to trespass too long on the House at this hour (1.20); and therefore I will only say that I have ventured to move the second reading of this Bill to-night because I do feel, from the support I have received from a large number of recognized representatives of Nonconformist Bodies, there is very little in the principle of the Bill to which anyone can object. I believe every objection can be met in Committee; provisions can be inserted to protect every interest it is desirable to protect, and to extend to all Nonconformist Bodies which we desire to recognize the benefits of the Bill. I apologize, in one sense, to the House for having made my statement briefly—I hope I have made it clearly. I trust the House will see fit to pass the Bill, because I do feel we shall thereby do much to remedy a grievance which has been seriously felt in many places, and, at the same time, be able to cheapen marriage without in any way impairing the security which at present attends it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Richard Webster.*)

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): It may be thought that this Bill should pass without any comment from this side of the House; but I venture to submit that this is a most important question, affecting the civil position and the religious feelings of an immense number of people in this country. I think, with very great respect to the hon. and learned Gentleman the late Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster), that this is a measure which ought to have been in the hands of a responsible Government, who really could have dealt with it at a time when it would have been possible for what passed to have come to the knowledge of those most deeply interested. Now, I ask whether, at half-past 1 o'clock in the morning, it is reasonable to enter upon a discussion of this question? Although the hon. and learned Gentleman has apologized for the length of time he occupied in proposing the second reading, I think he would have been justified in going far more into detail than he did. In the first place, the hon. and learned Gentleman has left us altogether in doubt as to the character of the communications he has received, and as to what Bodies he has received the intimations and suggestions that have come into his hands. Without intending to be in any way disrespectful to the hon. and learned Gentleman, I must say I should have thought he was hardly the man to whom the different Nonconformist Bodies would forward statements as to their wants. ["Oh!"] I do not wish to throw, for one moment, any doubt upon the good faith of the hon. and learned Gentleman and those whose names are on the back of the Bill; but it is absolutely necessary that I, or some other Member in the same position as myself, should rise and appeal to the House to adjourn the debate upon this subject. It is impossible, Sir, that a discussion of this character can really reach those who are interested. The hon. and learned Gentleman has not told us how many thousand places of worship this Bill will affect, or how many thousand ministers and marriages per annum will come under the operation of the measure; and therefore I do say that the House has done everything that is necessary to-night in allowing the hon. and learned Gentleman to make his statement in moving the second reading, and that time ought to be allowed for the representations of those who are so deeply interested in the question to reach hon. Members. When such time has been allowed we can enter upon the discussion of the Bill on the second reading, and determine whether the Bill in its present form may be allowed to go forward. Besides, there are other Bills of a similar character either before the House or shortly to be advanced to the second reading stage, and it may be necessary that this and those other Bills should go to a Select Committee. Furthermore, the hon. and learned Gentleman has left the House altogether in the dark as to what is the custom in Scotland and Ireland. It is found there are methods of registration and of conducting marriages in Scotland and Ireland which are more consonant with the feelings of the people than the cumbrous system which prevails in this country. Surely we are entitled to have under consideration the form of marriage prevailing in both Scotland and Ireland; and if the hour were not so late I would venture to take up this very material point. Sir, in my judgment the attention of Parliament and the country requires to be brought back to this one point. By the law as it at present exists Parliament has given to all persons seeking to be married in this country the right to go through a civil ceremony only, without any religious ceremony superadded. All the safeguards that the State requires in the carrying out of this most important engagement are secured under this civil form of marriage. If that be the case, I want to know why Parliament should trouble itself about the religious ceremony, or about what is called the solemnization of marriage? I do not wish to cast any slight upon the religious service; no doubt there are persons who attach more importance to marriage when it is accompanied by religious ceremony. There are other points the hon. and learned Gentleman has not explained. In his kindness and consideration in making all registered ministers *quasi*-servants of the State he has brought them under severe penalties. There is a £10 penalty provided in one clause, and in another clause there is a felony staring in the face ministers who undertake this duty. Why, surely, when there are such pitfalls and such dangers ahead as there are in this Bill, it is not a reasonable thing that the House should be asked to accept the second reading of this measure at this hour of the morning (1.30). I only wish to say, in conclusion, I am sure thousands of ministers and thousands of those who marry at Nonconformist places of worship would think we were failing in our duty in allowing a Bill of this character to pass the second reading stage without adequate time being given for its deliberate consideration. I beg to move that this debate be now adjourned.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): Mr. Speaker, I second the Motion, and I do so on a special ground. I wish to make an appeal to the House and the Government that they will allow this Order and the subsequent Orders of the Day to be postponed till another day, because there is a Motion on the Paper in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for the Central Division of Edinburgh (Mr. J. Wilson), and this is the very last day, according to the statute, on which it can be considered by the House. It is now half-past 1 o'clock in the morning, and therefore I ask that the House will allow my hon. Friend to bring forward his Motion concerning the Fettes Endowment Scheme. I appeal to the Government to give us their assistance in this matter.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Illingworth.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I am one of those who support the Bill on principle, as it removes a very decided objection to the present regulations concerning the solemnization of Nonconformist marriages; it gets rid of the obligation to have a Registrar present. While I think the object is a good one, I am bound to say I think the Bill will require a great deal of amendment in Committee. There are several points to which the hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir Richard Webster) has himself referred which will, in Committee, receive a great deal of consideration. Now, after hearing the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth), and having regard to the fact that the Bill must be discussed on the second reading far more than it has been discussed to-night, and that there is a Motion on the Paper with respect to the Fettes Endowment Scheme which must, if it is to be discussed at all, be discussed to-night, this being the last day allowed by statute for its consideration, I think it would be well that the discussion upon the second reading of this Bill be postponed. I shall support the second reading.

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I am sorry to hear the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, because the principle of the Bill is exactly what he stated. There is a difficulty as to the attendance of Registrars at Nonconformist chapels. ["Order!"] I am going to say why I think the second reading should not be postponed; Mr. Speaker will call me to Order if I am out of Order. The principle of the Bill is agreed to on all hands; but it is quite clear that when we get into Committee some alterations will be necessary. My hon. and learned Friend (Sir Richard Webster) has pointed out some of them, and I have no doubt the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth) will point out more. It will be much better to discuss the measure on going into Committee than to adjourn the debate now and resume it at this point, because when we have passed this point we shall know the Amendments hon. Members propose, for they will be on the Paper. If we are allowed to take the second reading of the Bill simply on the ground that it confirms the principle that the presence of Registrars at Nonconformist chapels during marriage ceremonies shall no longer be necessary, when we get into Committee we can discuss the details. I think the Bill should now be read a second time.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, S.): I must demur to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that the principle of the Bill is accepted on all hands. So far as I am aware, not a single Nonconformist Body has yet expressed an opinion upon it. They have not yet had an opportunity. I have reason to know, however, that arrangements are being made to enable the Nonconformists to take the matter into full consideration. They will be greatly astonished if they learn to-morrow that this House has affirmed the principle of the Bill by reading it a second time. I hope the hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir Richard Webster) will be content with having made his statement; and, if he does not assent to the Motion for Adjournment, I trust the House will take the matter into its own hands and insist on an adjournment.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): If the House intends to discuss the Motion of the hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. J. Wilson) it would be prudent not to continue this discussion further.

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

MARRIAGES (HOURS OF SOLEMNIZATION) BILL.—[BILL 62.]

(*Mr. Carvell Williams, Mr. Richard, Mr. Ince.*)

CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, S.): I now beg, with the permission of the House, to move that this Bill be read the third time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Mr. Carvell Williams.*)

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I must on this Motion point out the very unreasonable course the hon. Gentleman has taken. He has objected, as also has his hon. Friend behind him the Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth), to the second reading of the Bill of my hon. and learned Friend (Sir Richard Webster), and now he is attempting to press on his own Bill. I do not suppose any opposition will be offered to his Motion, and I merely rise to draw attention to the great difference between the manner in which we meet Bills of hon. Gentlemen opposite and hon. Gentlemen opposite meet Bills of ours.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): There is no objection to this Bill in any quarter of the House, and it has passed the second reading stage.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS (IMPROVEMENT EXPENSES) BILL.—[BILL 7.]

(*Mr. Dodds, Sir Edward Reed, Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. William Cook, Mr. Bullard.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

MR. DODDS (Stockton): I will not stand for more than a single moment between the House and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. J. Wilson). I merely wish to move that the Bill go into Committee *pro formâ*, for the purpose of introducing Amendments. A large number of Amendments have been prepared, and many of them I shall be glad to accept.

Bill *considered* in Committee, and *reported;* to be *printed*, as amended [Bill 153]; *re-committed* for *Thursday* 8th April.

MOTIONS.

——o——

FETTES SCHEME.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Edinburgh, Central): I beg to move the following Resolution:—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent to the Scheme of the Educational Endowment (Scotland) Commission now lying upon the Table of the House for the management of the Fettes Endowments, Edinburgh."

In a very few words I will explain to the House the reason why I make this Motion. I say, in the first place, I am compelled to do it owing to having received numerous complaints from Edinburgh against the passing of the proposed scheme. These complaints have taken shape more particularly in two Petitions which were recently presented to this House, one from the Lord Provost and Town Council of Edinburgh, and the other from the Convention of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs of Scotland—the Town Council of Edinburgh interesting themselves locally, as being the Body representing the town in which the Institution is situated, and the Convention of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs interesting themselves in the matter generally, and showing how extensive is the interest taken in the matter throughout Scotland. I may explain to the House that Sir William Fettes, who was the founder of the Institution, was a native of Edinburgh, and at one time occupied the position of Lord Provost and Master of the Merchant Company. He died in 1836, leaving £166,000 sterling for the purpose of building a hospital—I quote from Sir William Fettes' will—

> "That the residue of my estate shall form an Endowment for the maintenance, education, and outfit of young people whose parents have either died without leaving sufficient funds for that purpose, or who, from innocent misfortune, are unable, during their own lives, to make suitable provision for the education of their children."

It was thus a purely benevolent Trust and Institution for the benefit of children whose parents were not able to bring them up and educate them, and give them an outfit in life. For the administration of the Trust, Sir William Fettes appointed certain private Trustees, but with power to devolve the whole Trust upon a Public Body at any time they thought fit to do so. They did not, however, take advantage of the alternative named in the will and devolve the Trust upon the Public Bodies specified, but continued by succession to administer it as a private Trust. Nothing was done by the Trustees until 1864, by which time the £166,000 left by Sir William Fettes had accumulated to the sum of £484,000. The Trustees then began to build an hospital or college, or schoolhouse, with adjacent ground. This building cost £227,000, and with the balance they opened the establishment. The establishment was opened with a limited number of foundationers, who were to be educated gratis, but who afterwards were charged a sum of £30 each; and along with this limited number of foundationers there were a large number of children from the upper and middle classes of life admitted, who, of course, paid a much larger sum. Until recently the entire number of children educated on the foundation of that magnificent charity was only 229, and that notwithstanding the fact that they paid about £30 each towards the Charity. Not one of them got the outfit and that full maintenance that was designed by the will of Sir William Fettes. Well, it was maintained, I believe, by the private Trustees that it was the intention of Sir William Fettes to endow a purely charitable Institution; but the inhabitants of Edinburgh contend that the founder having been Master of the Merchant Company, under whose control an Institution of the kind already exists, intended to found an hospital very much on the lines of the Merchant Company's School, called George Watson's Institution. But in that, as you will see from what I am saying, the Trustees signally failed. The Institution recently came under the scope of the Endowed Hospital Commissioners, and this scheme was laid on the Table some time ago, and if no interposition of the kind that I indicate takes place that scheme will become law. The scheme, I am free to admit, is an improvement on things as they are. It opens up the Trust and admits certain public officials thereto. Notably, the new Trust will include the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, the Master of the Merchant Company, the Dean of Faculty, a member appointed by the Writers to the Signet, and other representatives of Public Bodies; but it continues the private Trustees. Those for whom I act object to the continuance of these private Trustees. They maintain that Sir William Fettes designed it to be a public Trust; and they say that, owing to the unfortunate fact that it was not so at the beginning, the conduct of the Trust until now has been of a most unsatisfactory kind. They object, also, that, though the scheme is an improvement on the old system, it has not taken sufficient measures for the recognition of the class of children for whom it was originally intended. It still limits too much the number of boys who are in the Institution, and leaves too much access to children of the middle and upper classes. Now, I do not intend, at this late hour of night, to enter into too much detail. It is impossible for us tonight to discuss details. I, therefore, only ask the House to agree to present an Address to Her Majesty, asking that Her Majesty may withhold consent. For the City of Edinburgh we only ask further time to discuss the matter locally, to see if some more advantageous scheme —some scheme more adapted to the position of the funds, and more like the original intention of the testator—cannot be agreed to. I do not ask the House to go into any detail whatever. All I ask is that the scheme may be reconsidered in Edinburgh, and breathing time given to allow the parties to discuss it further, and, if possible, devise a scheme more satisfactory.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent to the Scheme of the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commission now lying upon the Table of the House for the management of the Fettes Endowments, Edinburgh."—(*Mr. John Wilson, Edinburgh.*)

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) seconded the Motion.

MR. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): At this late hour of the night I will not detain the House longer than is necessary; but this Motion reflects upon the scheme which is now on the Table; and, as one of the Educational Endowment Commissioners who prepared the scheme, I feel called upon to make a few remarks in answer to the hon. Gentleman who has just addressed the House. The position of the Commissioners when this endowment was brought before them was simply this—that they had not to consider so much what was to be done with Sir William Fettes' Endowment, as what was to be done with the College which had been erected and was maintained by the Trustees of that Endowment. Here was, as the hon. Gentleman has explained, a College erected at a cost of nearly £250,000, equipped in the best manner, and erring only in this, as a building—that it was, perhaps, too beautiful and too grand for almost any purpose. But, beautiful and costly as it is, it is admitted to be admirably adapted for the purposes of a first-class secondary school. The College has been in existence for some years, and has attained a state of considerable prosperity; in fact, it is now one of the best conducted and most successful of our great public schools. Although so much money has been spent upon the buildings, the College has now an income, from the accumulation of Sir William Fettes' bequest, of from £6,000 to £7,000 a-year. The question which the Commissioners had to consider principally was, could they do better than continue this school, which was contributing most efficiently to the higher education of Scotland—continue it under improved regulations? We were not unanimous. The Commissioners are seven, and two of our number did not agree with the majority; but five were of opinion that their duty was not to interfere with the school, which has been conducted so well, and which is contributing so efficiently to the higher education of the country, but to see that it is placed under such regulations as shall give the public security for its continued good management in the future, and especially that the funds of the Endowment proper shall be expended exclusively upon those who are in need of assistance for their education. The position which the Trustees had taken was that Sir William Fettes had given them liberty to make regulations regarding his Endowment, and to select that class of young persons requiring assistance for their education who were in the greatest need of such assistance. The Trustees came to the conclusion that for the poorest class of children there was already ample provision made in Edinburgh; but that there was a class of poor—professional men and others—who had fallen in their circumstances, and who, but for their misfortunes, would have been able to give their children a good education—for whose children no provision was made; and they, therefore, decided to apply the funds of the Endowment to the education of boys belonging to that class, and that in doing so they should, at the same time, have a large school with paying pupils, so as to give the foundationers the advantage of being educated among a large number of other boys receiving the same course of training. The regulations which the Commissioners decided upon and have embodied in this scheme may be classed under two heads. The first relates to the Governing Body. The Trustees named by Sir William Fettes were not bound to hand over their charge to another body of Trustees. They were left with an indication of Sir William Fettes' wishes, in the event that they should wish to hand over the fund to another Body. But the Educational Commissioners have appointed by this scheme a Body consisting of 11 at present, but which will ultimately consist of nine Governors; and in appointing that Governing Body they have sought to secure a fair representation of the different interests of the country and the neighbourhood, and to make the best provision they can for having this Educational Institution thoroughly well superintended. One of the nine is to be appointed by the magistrates and Town Council of Edinburgh; and it must be borne in mind that, although this Institution was to be in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, there is nothing in Sir William Fettes' will to indicate that he wished its benefits to be confined to Edinburgh. Another of the nine is to be appointed by the University of Edinburgh, another by the Merchant Company of Edinburgh, another by the Dean and Faculty of Advocates, another by the Writers to the Signet, one minister of religion elected by the Governors, one Governor by the Senators of the College of Justice, one elected by the Chamber of Commerce, and another by the Royal College of Physicians. That will give a thoroughly representative Body of Governors for this Institution. The scheme also gives strict regulations as to the future administration of the College; and a point I would especially call attention to is this—that by this scheme there will be a distinct separation of the funds of the Endowment from the revenue from school fees. The revenue from school fees is to be sufficient for the maintenance and education of the boarders, and for paying interest on the cost of the boarding houses. The boarders will receive no pecuniary benefit from the Fettes' Endowment except the use of the school buildings. That is all they will receive. In return they will give the foundationers the benefit of being educated with them in a large secondary school. The funds of the Endowment will be expended exclusively upon the education and maintenance of boys who are of the class designated in the will of Sir William Fettes as—

> "Young people whose parents have either died without leaving sufficient funds to provide for their education, or, from innocent misfortune are unable, during their own lives, to give a suitable education to their children."

In the first place, there are to be foundationers, who are to be exclusively of that class—50 foundationers, or as many as the Governors may find themselves able to appoint—and to each of these foundationers is to be given, not only free education and maintenance, but also an allowance, if he is found to be in circumstances to require it, of £20 a-year. Then there are to be 12 or more Foundation Scholarships, carrying similar benefits, which are restricted to boys whose parents and guardians are not in such circumstances as to enable them to give them a thorough education. There are to be Scholarships of from £20 to £60, also restricted to boys whose parents require assistance for the education of their families. There are to be two Exhibitions, one restricted to foundationers, and another not so restricted. But it is unnecessary to go further into details. The Commissioners had to consider two alternatives. One was to sacrifice this great work that was going on in Fettes' College, and revert to a different kind of Institution altogether; and in doing so they would have had the difficulty of disposing of a building that would have been very unsaleable for any ordinary purpose, and they would have had the responsibility of putting an end to a good work, which I believe is required in Scotland. The other alternative was to continue the good work, and to endeavour to secure that in the future there should be no danger of Fettes' Endowment going to those who were not in circumstances to require it. We think that that has been done by the scheme which has been adopted by five of the seven Commissioners, and which has received the approval of the Scottish Education Department. The point to which I ask specially to call attention is this—that by this scheme there is to be a distinct separation in the accounts of the College between the funds of the Endowment and the revenue from school fees.

Mr. GOSCHEN (Edinburgh, E.): Sir, I should consider it a crime to take up more time than is absolutely necessary, at this hour of the night, in speaking on this question. The discussions which have taken place in this House during the last two or three years have shown that wrong has sometimes been done by the diversion of Endowments. This question has come on at so late an hour that it is almost impossible to debate it to the extent it requires. The case seems to me to be, from all the information that can be gathered on the subject, that this College has certainly been doing considerable work. It has provided secondary education of a kind which Scotland has not got; and, so far as education is concerned, there is no doubt it would be a shock to all interested in the progress of education in Scotland to see the work of this College suspended. But this is not enough. We have to inquire how far, notwithstanding this good work, it is in harmony with the will of Sir William Fettes which was made in 1836. It would not be sufficient to look merely at the work done, and I cannot allow myself to be influenced in this matter entirely by the work done, unless it can be shown, at the same time, that the scheme itself is fairly within the founder's intentions. I think it is perfectly clear that this Charity was not intended for the working classes. The working classes are indirectly interested in it; but the Charity seems to have been founded for all those who, having been in a somewhat better position, had, by misfortune, become unable to provide suitable education for their children; and it does seem extraordinary that, such being the terms of the will, the College, of which the buildings cost £250,000, should, until a recent date, only have had 50 foundationers altogether. Inquiry has been made, and the Commissioners have made a scheme, which is on the Table of the House; but, with every desire not to impede the educational work which is going on, I cannot reconcile myself to the idea that the new scheme sufficiently carries out the idea of Sir William Fettes, and therefore I am in favour of suspending the scheme, by witholding from it the assent of the Sovereign for a time, in order that it may be further developed and the College be made to confer benefit on a larger number of the class to whom, in my opinion, the Charity was intended to apply.

Mr. J. P. ROBERTSON (Bute): Sir, this is a question of great importance, and I think it would be very wrong if any rash decision were arrived at with regard to it, especially after the very brief speech with which my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. J. Wilson) introduced the subject. The question before the House is whether the Royal Assent should be refused to a scheme which has been most maturely considered and only promulgated after full public inquiry. The Motion involves this—whether an arrest is to be put on an Educational Establishment in Scotland to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Eastern Division of Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) did no more than justice when he said that it is one of the most successful and elevating educational influences in Scotland. The main question is, whether the application of this Endowment proposed to be made is authorized by the will of Sir William Fettes? Now, Sir, this is more especially a legal question. The will can be read by any layman, and, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, it certainly does not point to the application of the funds to the educational requirements of the labouring classes. On the contrary, there are plain indications that the funds are to be applied to the educational requirements of persons who, having formerly occupied better positions, have, by innocent misfortune, or the death of parents, been less satisfactorily provided for. But even assuming that there was no such indication, no one can for a moment contend that the Trustees had not full discretion to select that class of necessitous persons who most require such an educational endowment. Now, it so happens that there is in Edinburgh, for the operative and labouring classes, an unusually abundant provision of Endowments of this kind; and the Trustees in this case, who fortunately are a body who, by their acquaintance with educational matters, their position, their character, and their abilities, are beyond all suspicion, came to a conclusion that the class of poor people who ought to have this money was the class who, having occupied professional or mercantile positions, had fallen into poverty. That their theory is sound in law is proved by a single proposition, and it is this—there is a section in the Act which enables anyone who holds that there has been a breach of the law of the will, to go before the Court of Session with a case stated; and it is a remarkable fact that that clause was not taken advantage of by those who are represented by the hon. Member for the Central Division of Edinburgh (Mr. J. Wilson). If it be a question of law, then, as the right hon. Gentleman has put it, surely a Court of Law would have been the proper place for it, and why it should have been referred to the House of Commons, and on the last day possible for raising the question, and when we are pressed into a corner and speakers in defence of the scheme have to ask the indulgence of the House, is a question which I will leave the House to determine. A great burden of proof lies on those who object to the scheme, because it has been maturely considered and publicly discussed; witnesses have been examined upon it, and it has been adhered to by the Commissioners. And when we remember the names of the Commissioners and their position, who have approved the scheme, I think it comes with such a sanction of authority as should make the House very cautious in pronouncing against it. There is another point which the House ought, in my opinion, fairly to consider. This is not a question to be decided *ab ante.* We have not now to settle what ought to be the form of the application of these funds. That has been decided for years; and what this House will do, if it affirms this Motion, is to ask that there should be a gigantic waste of money which has been already applied, and which is doing such good work in the country. You have that splendid edifice, which is one of the main points of accusation against the scheme, and what is proposed is that, possibly, it could be sold; and yet, if you were to try to sell it, no purchaser could be found who would offer a sum that would not represent the loss of a large portion of the capital. Now, Sir, considering that the hands of those to whom the management has been entrusted by the whole of Scotland are perfectly clear of any suspicion of bias, is it not rash that the House should, on the mere request of the hon. Member for the Central Division of Edinburgh, who is acting not on his own judgment, but on influences from behind, do anything which would upset an Establishment of the kind? Is it not well known to those who are doing their best for Scottish education that there is nothing in Scotland which has given such a stimulus to education as this Endowment? Is it not the case that it has opened vistas of further development of intellectual powers to those who are not affluent in Scotland, which formerly were never dreamed of? And would it not be a monstrous thing if this House were, in the circumstances in which this Motion is pressed, to uproot so valuable an Institution, and put up in its place some scheme of which nothing is known more than that it will be the very opposite of that which exists?

MR. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): Sir, I think that, as I have probably been very much the cause of this discussion, the House will bear with me for a few minutes. I have not one word to say against the excellency of the education given to boys in Fettes' College, or against the administration up to the time when it came under the control of the Educational Endowments Commissioners; but I do say, and I believe, that not one of my Colleagues would have done what the Trustees have done had they been the Trustees, instead of being the persons to overhaul the work done by the Trustees. But the chief point which I desire to bring under the notice of the House is this—that by the Educational Endowments Act it is prescribed, as a guide for the Commissioners, that they should, as far as possible, carry out the provisions of the will of the founder of the Endowment. Now, if the will and the intentions of Sir William Fettes is to be preferred, my feeling is that the majority of the Commissioners were wrong in so far approving of the previous action of the Trustees as not only to sanction their proceedings, but perpetuate those proceedings and carry on the work of the Endowment on the same lines as those upon which the Trustees had been conducting it. I having nothing to say against the public school system of England; but I do not believe it possible that Sir William Fettes would have left £166,000 to found an Educational Endowment for the exclusive purpose of providing for the education, maintenance, and outfit of young persons in comparatively destitute circumstances, upon the system adopted in the public schools of England. That he should have left the money for such a purpose, which had never previously been thought or dreamt of in Scotland, I cannot conceive. Sir William Fettes restricted the Endowment to £10 per annum in the case of the children of his own relatives under 15 years of age; and I cannot conceive it was his intention to found an Institution in which the mere cost of education should be £50 per annum. My hon. Friend (Mr. J. A. Campbell) has stated, as one of the majority of the Commission, that they felt it was desirable to perpetuate and maintain this Institution; but the scheme which I suggested, in opposition to that of my Colleagues, did provide for the perpetuation and maintenance of the same building, and the work that was to be done in it. My hon. Friend says that there is still £7,000 a-year available for the purpose of carrying out Sir William Fettes' will; but I ask whether anyone can possibly imagine that £140 a-year was to be expended for the education and maintenance of each child upon the foundation in an Institution of that kind? I believe that any impartial person who will look over the will of Sir William Fettes, and read the Memorandum which I addressed to my Colleagues for the purpose of bringing my views under their consideration, will decide that I was right, and that my Friends were wrong.

MR. TREVELYAN (Hawick, &c.): Sir, I should be the last man to trespass on the time of the House at this hour. But there has been nothing said from the Government Bench; and this is a very serious matter upon which a very few words must be said from what practically on this occasion is the Government point of view, because I am bound to say that I am speaking up to a certain point the opinions of the Government. But that opinion, now that it is formed—and I am bound to say I think it ought to be accepted by the House—is, to a certain extent, conclusive as against the recommendation that has been made in the other direction. The House is asked to overset a very important scheme, which, indeed, was very carefully drawn up by the Educational Endowments Commission. These gentlemen are doing hard, unpaid work of extreme value, and if one of their most important schemes is to be lightly overset, it will throw into confusion and cast discredit upon a work which is of the greatest importance to Scotland. On what grounds are we asked to overset this scheme? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) is generally out-spoken and very clear; but I must own that, having listened to his speech, I did not hear any argument sufficient to induce the House to come to a decision against this scheme. What are the objections to it in its present condition? Everybody admits that the Institution is doing great and good work for Scotland. What are the objections to allowing it to continue that work. The first objection is that the Board of Trustees is not what it ought to be; and, upon that point, I am bound to say that I do to a great extent agree with the hon. Member for Falkirk (Mr. Ramsay). But that is not a sufficient reason to take the very grave step of what is called postponing the scheme, but what is in reality making it quite impossible for another eight months at least. The proposals which have been put before the public are such as, I think, the Commission could not have accepted. There is the proposal to turn the College into a vast hospital. Sir, the hospital system is condemned, and it is because the system is condemned that this Commission was instituted; and to turn Fettes College into a hospital would be an unheard of act. On the other hand, it is proposed to take a large portion of the funds and to devote them to sending children to the day secondary schools of Edinburgh; but already Edinburgh is provided, and over-provided, with these opportunities for the education of children. There are, at least, 2,600 boys educated at the secondary schools; and there are, in addition to that number, 1,000 more children educated at the hospitals, or maintained in the schools; and when we come to elementary schools, there are 6,000 children educated in them. Well, Sir, we have this gigantic building; and it is, I agree, a scandal that so large an amount should have been spent on it. I am proud to belong to what we consider the second public school in England—Harrow. There are 2,550 boys there, and these boys have been provided with all the necessities of education for £126,000—that is to say, one-fourth of the sum for which half that number of boys are educated at Edinburgh. But I am willing to admit that, although the school may not be exactly what Sir William Fettes meant it to be, that it is a going concern—that it is a flourishing and healthy concern. No one has shown any means by which a great benefit to the community can be secured by diverting any large amount of the funds from that Establishment. The mere fact of having a more representative Board is no sufficient reason for taking a step that would overset the scheme. What has been done, and will be done, is that, in addition to the great and increased advantages which are given to the foundationers under the new system, large economies will most undoubtedly be made, which will enable the number of those charitably educated to be largely increased; and the more I think over it the less I can see that any advantage is to be gained by oversetting this scheme, and attempting to set up another.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): Sir, I wish to say a few words after the right. hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, in order to call back the attention of the House to the question really before it. The two speeches we have heard from the Front Benches have entirely drawn the attention of the House from the real issue. The speeches of the hon. Member for Bute (Mr. J. P. Robertson) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) have been devoted to the discussion of a question which is certainly not before the House on the Motion of my hon. Friend (Mr. J. Wilson). What is before the House is, not the discussion of certain proposals which are not before us, and which may have been suggested anonymously in the newspapers; nor is it what the hon. Member for Bute said—that we were bringing forward a kind of factious opposition to a scheme that has been freely and publicly discussed and publicly inquired into. It is very far from that. We are here to-night for the purpose of discharging a statutory duty imposed upon the House of Commons by the Act under which the Commissioners hold their powers. The statutory duty which lies before us is the consideration as to whether we are to give Parliamentary sanction, by our vote to-night, to what the right hon. Gentleman himself allowed, and which nobody who looks into this scheme can fail to allow, to be a very considerable diversion of funds from the purpose to which the founder of this Charity intended them to be applied—a diversion from a poorer to a richer class. I do not wish to say one word against the efficiency of the College. We say, if you want to establish a school of that sort, you ought to establish and support it out of your own money, and not out of funds left for a totally different purpose, and for a totally different class. The question which is before this new House of Commons is, Are we to give our sanction to the continuance of this diversion?

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Sir, I wish to say a single word on this question, for two reasons—in the first place, because I have the honour to represent a constituency which has a good deal to do with education in Edinburgh; and, in the second place, because I am surprised that the hon. Member who has just spoken should express astonishment at anything being sanctioned which is not in accordance with the intentions of the founder. I take it to be one of the objects of the appointment of this Royal Commission, that, in all circumstances where it was thought advisable by the light of modern ideas, they should divert funds from the intentions expressed by founders, and appropriate them in a manner more suitable to the requirements of the present time. The question we have to consider is—"Has the Royal Commission done the best which the circumstances of the time require?" The great mass of educated opinion in Edinburgh, represented by those who stand in the highest position in our educational establishments, and, as I am astonished to find, represented also by the heads of establishments competing with and opposed to the College, are decidedly in favour of the scheme of the Commissioners being carried out.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes, 61; Noes 82: Majority 21.—(Div. List, No. 51.)

HYDE PARK CORNER (NEW STREETS) BILL.

Select Committee to consist of Five Members, Three to be nominated by the House, and Two by the Committee of Selection:—Mr. COBB, Lord ALGERNON PERCY, and Mr. LEVESON GOWER *nominated* Members of the Committee; Three to be the quorum.—(*Mr. Leveson Gower.*)

PRISON OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

On Motion of Sir Edward Reed, Bill to amend the Prisons Act of 1887, so far as regards the Superannuation of Prisons Officers, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir Edward Reed and Mr. Henry H. Fowler.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 154.]

POOR RELIEF (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. John Morley, Bill to make temporary provision for the better relief of the destitute poor in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by John Morley and Mr. Henry H. Fowler.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 155.]

INTERNATIONAL AND COLONIAL COPYRIGHT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Acland, Bill to amend the Law respecting International and Colonial Copyright, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Acland, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Osborne Morgan, and Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 156.]

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (SALE TO CHILDREN) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Conybeare, Bill for the protection of children against the Sale to them of Intoxicating Liquors, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Theodore Fry, Mr. Cossham, Mr. Valentine, Mr. Allison, Mr. O. V. Morgan, and Mr. Channing.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 157.]

COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Companies Acts of 1862, 1867, 1870, 1877, 1879, 1880, and 1883.

Resolution *reported*:—Bill *ordered* to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 158.]

LAMBETH AND OTHER WATER BILLS.

Select Committee on the Lambeth Water Bill, Southwark and Vauxhall Water Bill, and East London Water Bill to consist of Nine Members, Five to be nominated by the House, and Four by the Committee of Selection:—Mr. WESTLAKE, Mr. O. V. MORGAN, Mr. MORGAN HOWARD, Mr. MURDOCH, and Mr. THOROLD ROGERS *nominated* Members of the Committee.—(*Mr. Thorold Rogers.*)

House adjourned at quarter before Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, March 30, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Compensation for Damages * (50); Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment * (51); Marriages (Hours of Solemnisation) * (52).

Second Reading—Idiots (46).

Committee—Lunacy Acts Amendment (37-53).

Select Committee—Parish Churches (5), *nominated.*

Third Reading—Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order * (38); Consolidated Fund (No. 2),* and *passed.*

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 37.) COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (on re-commitment).

Clause 27 (Amendments as to single patients).

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Herschell), in moving to leave out sub-section (1) and insert the following sub-section :—

> "After the passing of this Act, no order shall be made for the reception of a lunatic as a single patient in the house of a medical practitioner except by the Judge in Lunacy, and every such order shall be obtained in such manner and subject to such conditions as the General Orders in Lunacy for the time being direct,"

said, he had endeavoured to amend the Bill and to frame this clause so as to meet some of the objections which had been raised by their Lordships, and gave facilities for excepting altogether from the operation of the clause the case of a patient suffering from insanity of a temporary character, who was detained on a certificate of a medical man in a private asylum. He believed that such cases were not frequent, and he quite agreed that it was most undesirable to impose more restrictions in regard to them than there existed at present. Again, he would exempt from the operation of the clause the case of those persons decayed from old age, many of whom were detained by their own desire in the houses of medical men, who, under the provisions of the Bill, would still be permitted to take single cases into their houses by order of a Judge in Chambers. With this object he wished to amend the clause by inserting words to that effect.

Moved, in Clause 27, page 19, to leave out sub-section (1) and insert—

> "After the passing of this Act, no order shall be made for the reception of a lunatic as a single patient in the house of a medical practitioner except by the Judge in Lunacy, and every every such order shall be obtained in such manner and subject to such conditions as the General Orders in Lunacy for the time being direct."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

The Earl of SELBORNE said, that he was prepared to acquiesce in the present proposal.

The Earl of MILLTOWN asked if the "house" of a medical practitioner meant the house where he resided? As was well known, it was the practice with many practitioners to own several houses which were occupied by tenants; and he would suggest that it should be clearly understood that the patient could only be detained in the house in which the medical man resided.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, he so intended it, and he would further consider the form of the words before the stage of Report, in order to see that the wording carried out that view.

Motion *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to,* and *ordered* to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 42 (No new licences to be granted).

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Herschell), in moving the insertion, at the beginning of the clause, of two new sub-sections, the first of which empowered the Commissioners or Justices to renew the licence where a house had been in all respects well conducted, and the second provided for the case where, at the passing of the Act, arrangements might be in progress to establish a new house for the reception of lunatics, in the place of one in respect of which a licence had already been granted, said, he believed that the system of private lunatic asylums was wrong and mischievous in principle; and this opinion he had formed from an estimate of human nature, that where there was presented a great pecuniary temptation in one direction and man's duty called in another, especially when the performance of that duty depended on the exercise of intelligence, care, and skill, a tendency existed for the pecuniary interest somewhat to dim the vision and activity of intelligence. He rested his opinion also upon the opinions of gentlemen who had devoted the greater part of their lifetime to the actual work of visiting these asylums, and who were satisfied that no amount of visitation from the outside would be a complete protection to the patient against improper detention, so long as the medical man keeping the asylum had an interest in its conduct. But this view was in advance of what the public were yet prepared for, and at once to put an end to a system to which the public were accustomed, and of which many felt the beneficial use, would be impossible. While he hoped the gradual extinction of private asylums would be one result of the Bill, he was not prepared to shut his eyes and ears to what had been brought before him as to the injustice which might be done to those who had invested large sums in many of those private asylums if the House were to put an end to them, even at the end of the lives of those who at present kept them. He, therefore, reserved all vested interests. The only observation he would add was that in certain cases it might be expedient in the interest of the patients themselves that it should be permissible to remove them from one place to another, and that the Commissioners should be enabled to grant licences even to the successors of the present licensees, and in respect not only of the original but also of the substituted licence. This would not interfere with the principle of the Bill or permit the creation of any new vested interests. He would bring in an Amendment to this effect on the Report.

Moved, in page 29, insert at the beginning of the clause the following subsections:—

"(1.) If the commissioners, or in the case of a house licensed by justices the justices, are of opinion that a house licensed for the reception of lunatics has been in all respects well conducted by the licensee or licensees, the commissioners or justices may upon the expiry of the license from time to time renew the licence for that house to the former licensee or licensees, or any one or more of them, or to his or their successors in business.

"(2.) If at the passing of this Act any licensee or licensees shall have made arrangements to establish a new house for the reception of lunatics in the place of a house in respect of which a licence has already been granted, and the commissioners, or if the house is within the jurisdiction of justices the justices, are of opinion that such new house will be more suited for the purpose than the old house, and are also of opinion that the old house has been in all respects well conducted, the commissioners or justices may grant to the licensee or licensees of the old house, or any one or more of them, a licence for the new house, and may from time to time renew the same to the original licensee or licensees, or any one or more of them, or to his or their successors in business.

"(3.) Save as aforesaid."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he thought the proposal of the noble and learned Lord was reasonable and just; but he hoped that the cases in which such removal might be authorized should not be specified in the Bill, but should be left to the discretion of the Commissioners.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, he was quite ready to consider his noble and learned Friend's suggestion.

Motion *agreed to*.

On Question, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill?"

LORD GRIMTHORPE, in moving to omit the clause from the Bill, said, that if he could agree to the major proposition which underlay the clause he should agree with the Amendments. He admitted that the clause had been very much improved by the noble and learned Lord Chancellor; but he objected altogether to the lines on which it proceeded. He had made inquiries with the view of ascertaining whether there was any foundation for the complaints that were made against private asylums, and he was satisfied there were no substantial grounds for the prevalent impression which had gone abroad against them. It was assumed that the only motive which operated on the minds of the keepers of these asylums was the desire to keep their patients as long as possible. But was general professional reputation disregarded? Were not the keepers of asylums anxious to secure as large an amount of success as possible in the treatment of their patients? There was no evidence to show that the latter motives were weaker than the former. The more they succeeded the greater would be their reputation. He asserted that patients were not, as a matter of fact, kept longer in private asylums than in public asylums. In an article in *The Nineteenth Century* of February, 1885, Dr. Bucknill stated that there was the greatest diversity of opinion expressed before Mr. Dillwyn's Committee, some of the witnesses condemning while others approved of private asylums; and he very oddly added that the Committee was dominated by Members who knew more about the subject than the Chairman, who had wanted to suppress those asylums. Dr. Bucknill had expressed himself in favour of these asylums in 1878 and 1880; but in 1885 he changed his mind, although he had not adduced a single fact to explain the change. The late Lord Shaftesbury had, in 1859, expressed an unfavourable opinion of these asylums; but, after a careful examination, he also changed his mind the other way, and in 1878 gave the good reason for it to the Committee, that there had been a great improvement, and he as strongly advocated as he had previously condemned them. He had recently read a pamphlet by the keeper of one of these asylums, which, if its figures were accurate, established a very strong case. It was there stated that the average of "removals" for all causes during five years in public asylums was 26 or 27 per cent, whereas in private establishments it was 41 per cent, or 50 per cent higher than in the public institutions. Yesterday he received from the two asylums of the West Riding two other sets of figures which practically concurred with these, for out of nearly 3,000 inmates their "deliveries" were only 29 and 30 per cent. If, therefore, they found half as many people again discharged from private asylums as from public asylums, he asked what foundation was there for the allegation to which he had referred? He was speaking entirely in the interests of the public. He had no prejudice about the matter, and, until a few months ago, he never received any information on the subject; but having known four or five patients who had been in different private asylums—and they all stated that they were well treated—he had come to the conclusion that there was no reason to complain of the asylums in which they were kept. People sent their friends to private asylums because they believed they were better treated there than in public asylums. It might be thought that they were all influenced by sensational novels; and people who read these things probably thought the stories fairly represented what went on in private lunatic asylums; but there was no ground for the imputations, and he could not see why the existing competition between private and public asylums should be interfered with.

Moved, "To omit the Clause."—(*The Lord Grimthorpe.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, that the late Lord Shaftesbury, in a letter written last year, stated that as the result of 50 years' experience he retained his opinion that the system of proprietary houses was bad, and desired to see it extinguished. His noble and learned Friend (Lord Grimthorpe) had quoted certain figures as showing that there were more frequent discharges from private asylums. He should imagine that the removals from one private asylum or licensed house to another were much more frequent than the removals from one public asylum to another. Consequently the number of removals might not be the same as the number of discharges; besides, there might be considerable difference in the character of the cases sent to public and private asylums, as probably a majority of the more serious cases were sent to the former. Consequently, they could not regard such statistics as being conclusive. If there were an appreciable number of cases in which persons were wrongly detained, that was a sufficient reason for the present legislation. A medical man who visited a licensed house did not like to bring matters forward against a brother medical man, unless he had absolute proof. In illustration of this, he would mention a case where the Visitor felt satisfied that a patient whom he had seen was sane and ought to be discharged. But the proprietor of the asylum said—"If you heard the threats which he utters against his wife at night you would not consent to his release." In these circumstances the Visitor would not assume the responsibility of discharging the man; but he induced the relatives to remove him to another asylum, where he was watched at night for three months. During that time the man said nothing about his wife. On being discharged five years ago, he went home, and he had been living with his wife in complete happiness ever since. The point of the story that struck him was the illustration it afforded of the impossibility of a medical man who was visiting a patient taking upon himself the responsibility of discharging him in the face of statements made by the medical officer of the asylum. In the interests of the public he thought it would be best not to create any new vested interests, so that after a time public opinion should come to the conclusion that a system of public asylums was better than that of private licensed houses.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN said, that the noble and learned Lord had stated that the late Lord Shaftesbury altered the opinion which he expressed before the Select Committee in 1869 against the system of private asylums. So far from that, only two years ago in that House Lord Shaftesbury declared that he had not altered his opinion as to the evil principle of permitting individuals to acquire pecuniary interests in the detention of patients. He said that the whole system of private asylums was utterly abominable and indefensible, and acted most injuriously to the interests of the community.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK said, that as the Bill originally stood some amendment was, in his opinion, required in it; but the noble and learned Lord in charge of the measure had done as much as they could expect in the direction of meeting their wishes. As now amended, the Bill would produce this result—that if public opinion in any locality was strongly in favour of retaining private asylums they would continue, while if public opinion was against them they would be replaced by public asylums. By keeping a careful watch on private licensed houses public opinion might to some extent become favourable to them and enable them to protract their existence. He had heard many unsatisfactory accounts of public asylums, and it was inevitable that some cases of neglect should occur in them which were not likely to happen in licensed houses, where it was to the interest of the owners that the patients should be treated kindly. On the other hand, a very strong feeling existed as to the impolicy of giving individuals an interest in detaining patients in confinement, and he should recommend the noble and learned Lord to withdraw his Motion.

Motion (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn.*

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *ordered* to stand part of the Bill.

On Clause 43 (Amendments as to licensed houses).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL), in moving the omission of Sub-section 9, said, that, as the clause now stood, Local Authorities were bound within a term of five years to remove any pauper patients whom they might be keeping in licensed houses. It had been represented to him that in certain cases provision had been made in private asylums for the reception of pauper patients, and that they would suffer considerable pecuniary loss by this provision. Of course, it might be said that a person who had been in the habit of keeping an asylum to receive a number of pauper patients must take his chance as to continuing to do so, and that would justify him in leaving the clause as it was. On the other hand, he thought that the Local Authorities might be trusted to provide asylums for lunatics under the Bill to a much greater extent than they had hitherto done. He had, however, no strong opinion on the point.

Moved, "To omit Sub-section 9."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, that he was mainly responsible for the clause, which appeared in the Bill introduced into the House last year. His object in recommending it was that pauper lunatics should be kept at as little expense as possible to the ratepayers, provided they were properly treated.

Motion *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *ordered* to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 44 to 58, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 59 (Powers of Secretary of State to enforce provisions for providing asylums).

On the Motion of The LORD CHANCELLOR, Clause *struck out* of the Bill.

Clause 60 (Power to borrow).

Moved, "To omit the Clause."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK said, he had previously called the attention of the noble and learned Lord (the Lord Chancellor) to the cases of lunatics who had property from which the authorities had great difficulty, after having been put to charges in respect of the lunatics, in recouping themselves for their outlay, the executors in many instances keeping the property; and he would now ask him whether he was prepared to introduce any provision with regard to the repayment to the County Authorities out of the property of deceased lunatics of the expenses they might have been put to in respect of such lunatics, as it had been found that in such cases there was no means of recovering the costs?

The LORD CHANCELLOR, in thanking the noble Viscount for referring to the matter, said, that he would, on the Report, introduce a provision dealing with it.

Motion *agreed to;* Clause omitted accordingly.

Remaining Clauses *agreed to.*

Schedule *agreed to.*

The Report of the Amendments to be received on *Tuesday* next; and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 53.)

IDIOTS BILL.—(No. 46.)

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that its provisions had been included in the Lunacy Bill of last year; but that they had been now placed in a separate measure in accordance with a desire which was generally entertained. The separation of the two subjects had met with general approval.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Tuesday* next.

NAVY—STATE OF THE NAVY.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, in rising to ask the noble Marquess the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is his intention, at an early period of the Session, to state to the House the number of vessels of war which the Government may propose to have constructed; together with any other additions or changes in the Naval Service that may be in contemplation? said, the condition of the Navy was one of paramount importance to the country, and it was in the highest degree necessary that questions relating to it should be discussed early in the Session. In spite of what had been stated in "another place," their Lordships were very much in the dark as to the intentions of the Government; and he understood that with regard to two of the most powerful ships in the Navy there was considerable doubt as to their future. It was only right that the First Lord of the Admiralty, who concentrated within himself all the chief powers of the Board, should avail himself of the enforced leisure of that House in the early part of the Session to make a statement of the intentions of his Department, which the House, from its constitution, would be well qualified to criticize. There was a precedent in this matter, as the Earl of Northbrook made such a statement in 1884.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (The Marquess of RIPON) said, that he saw no good reason for departing from the old practice in this matter, under which it was customary for the general statement relating to the naval policy of the Government to be made in the other House of Parliament. If any statement on the subject were to be made in the House of Lords it would have to be made either before or after that which was made in the House of Commons. If it were made before it would, it seemed to him, be a very undesirable thing, and he could not think it would be acceptable to the other House of Parliament or fair to the Representative of the Admiralty in that House that the speech to be made in moving the Navy Estimates should be anticipated by a speech made in their Lordships' House. On the other hand, he must say he thought that many of their Lordships would take comparatively little interest in a statement made after the statement had been made in "another place," because it could only be a *réchauffé* of what had been stated elsewhere; and he was not at all desirous, after the very able statement made in the House of Commons a short time ago by his right hon. Friend Mr. Hibbert, of following him in probably a less able manner, and, at all events, in a manner much less interesting to the public. On those grounds he had come to the conclusion that it was undesirable to set an entirely new precedent in that matter. The noble Viscount had quoted the course taken in 1884 by the Earl of Northbrook when First Lord of the Admiralty; but that was a very special occasion. Public attention had been very greatly called to the state of the Navy. Her Majesty's Government had come to very important decisions as to the course to be pursued beyond those which had been announced at the time when the Estimates were moved; and his noble Friend (the Earl of Northbrook) then felt, and no doubt felt rightly, that it was desirable that a statement in regard to those intentions should be made in both Houses of Parliament. But he did not conceive that that would afford any real precedent for producing a sort of pale copy of the Navy Estimates that had been moved in the other House. He wished to give every information in his power that could properly be afforded to the House. He freely admitted to his noble Friend opposite (Viscount Sidmouth) that there were in that House many noble Lords who were very competent to discuss questions of naval policy, and who could do so with great advantage. If the noble Viscount, or any other noble Lord, gave him Notice of any Question in reference to the naval policy of Her Majesty's Government, he would be happy to supply him with all the information in his power. But he did not think it would be a good precedent to make a statement in that House in regard either to the Navy or the Army Estimates similar to that made in the other House when those Estimates were introduced.

THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH said, he thought there were good reasons why the House should receive the information desired by the noble Viscount. The most important announcement of naval policy that he had ever heard was made in their Lordships' House on the 2nd of December, 1884, and their Lordships might fairly wish to know whether, and in what way, the programme of the then Government was being carried out. There had been to Departmental Committees of Inquiry into two important branches of Naval Administration. The first of them was the Accountant General's Committee, and the second was the Committee so ably presided over by the present Controller of the Navy. He had never seen so sweeping a condemnation of the system of administration in the Dockyards as was contained in the Report of that Committee. What possible reason was there why their Lordships should not go into those matters and seek to find out from the best authority in that House—namely, the First Lord of the Admiralty —how it had occurred that that maladministration had remained so long undiscovered, and why it was left for the last year to bring to light so very lamentable a state of things? It was not from the want of hints and indications, because there had been the warnings of successive Reports of Committees and Commissions, which had left the conviction that a waste of public money was going on, which, however, they were debarred by the terms of Reference from entering into. There was not a single Member of the Commission over which he himself had the honour to preside who did not leave the room knowing that there was much more to learn and much more to correct. Admiral Graham's Committee had brought those matters to light, and that House, in his own opinion, was in some respects more qualified than the other House to discuss questions of Naval Administration, because their Lordships had not popularity to seek; they could discuss matters in a calm, judicial spirit, and with only one object in view—namely, what was best for the Public Service. He could not, therefore, accept the answer just given by the noble Marquess as anything like satisfactory. He hoped, however, that he might congratulate the Government on their determination to pursue what he might call a continuous, consistent, and steady policy of preparation, because without such a policy the country could not be protected from those occasional scares which had led to a form of voting public money that he thought was the very worst that could be adopted—namely, by Votes of Credit—and which had also led to haste in taking up or purchasing at enormous cost ships that really were not worth the money that was paid for them. He likewise congratulated the Government on another most important point—the improved form in which the Estimates were presented. They were now able to know the amount of the cost of material and labour for individual ships from year to year; they could see what was the liability of the nation in regard to ships, and also watch that liability from year to year up to their completion. He further congratulated the Government that in securing the services of the present Director of Naval Construction and the present Director of Dockyards they had obtained two public servants as able as any whom the county could desire to possess.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Earl GRANVILLE) said, his noble Friend opposite (the Earl of Ravensworth), in his otherwise fair speech, complained of the answer of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Ripon) being of an unsatisfactory character. He could not help thinking that his noble Friend must have misunderstood the answer. The noble Marquess laid down the principle which he should have thought would have recommended itself to so good a Conservative as his noble Friend—namely, that he wished to adhere to precedents in this matter. On the one hand, he desired not to introduce as a new practice a *réchauffé* of the statement of the whole condition of the Navy, such as was made in introducing the Vote in the other House; and, on the other hand, he expressed his great willingness to welcome to any amount discussion which their Lordships might like to bring forward. That appeared to him a perfectly legitimate and fair statement to make, and in no way unsatisfactory. Their Lordships would remark some differences between the two Houses. In the House of Commons there were not so many opportunities of discussing these questions of naval policy; but in their Lordships' House the Business was not so great, and hardly a week passed without the noble Viscount (Viscount Sidmouth) asking a Question about naval affairs; and he never observed any reluctance displayed by the noble Marquess as to giving all the information in his power. So far from the noble Marquess discouraging discussion on such an important matter as the Navy, he actually invited it.

THE EARL OF LEITRIM said, he would urge upon the Government that they should from time to time present Papers containing full information regarding the condition of the Navy, and more especially the progress of shipbuilding and naval architecture, without noble Lords having to move for them from time to time.

PARISH CHURCHES BILL [H.L.]

Select Committee on: The Lords following were named of the Committee:—

L. Abp. Canterbury.
D. Westminster.
E. Jersey.
E. Stanhope.
E. Powis.
E. Nelson.
E. Selborne.
V. Halifax.
L. Bp. London.
L. Bp. Peterborough.
L. Bp. Chichester.
L. Bp. Southwell.
L. Foxford.
L. Aberdare.
L. Norton.
L. Monk Bretton.
L. Halsbury.
L. Northington.
L. Lingen.
L. Grimthorpe.

The Committee to meet on *Friday* next, and to appoint their own Chairman.

House adjourned at Six o'clock, till To-morrow, Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, March 30, 1886.

MINUTES.] — NEW WRIT ISSUED — *For* Halifax, *v.* The Right honble James Stansfeld, President of the Local Government Board.

SELECT COMMITTEE — Town Holdings, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Sclater-Booth, and Mr. Dwyer Gray *added.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Bankruptcy (Agricultural Labourers' Wages) * [130].

Select Committee — Employers' Liability Act (1880) Amendment * [60], Mr. Giles *disch.*; Mr. Forwood *added.*

Third Reading — Army (Annual) * [150], and *passed.*

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS (NORWICH CITY).

MR. SPEAKER informed the House, that he had received from Mr. Justice Denman, and Sir Lewis Cave, knight, two of the Judges selected for the Trial of Election Petitions, a Certificate and Report relating to the Election for the City of Norwich:—

> We, George Denman and Lewis Cave, being two of the Judges on the rota for the trial of Election Petitions, having presided at the trial of an Election Petition in which Birkbeck and others were Petitioners and Harry Bullard was

Respondent, against the return of the said Harry Bullard as Member for the City of Norwich on the 25th day of November 1885, do hereby certify and report to the Speaker as follows :—

1stly. We hereby certify that, at the conclusion of the Trial of the said Petition, we determined that the said Harry Bullard was not duly elected, and that the election of the said Harry Bullard was void.

2ndly. We report that it has not been proved that any corrupt or illegal practice has been committed by or with the knowledge or consent of the said Harry Bullard at the said Election.

3rdly. We report that the said Harry Bullard was guilty by his Agents of corrupt practices at the said Election.

4thly. We report that the said Harry Bullard was not guilty of illegal practices by his Agents at the said Election.

5thly. We report that the following persons have been proved at the said Trial to have been guilty of corrupt practices, namely :—

Charles Wiggers, of 22, Lawson Road, St. Clement's Within, Shoemaker;
William Atkinson, of the Sir Garnet Wolseley Inn, Market Place, Licensed Victualler;
William Joseph Nightingale, of the Market Stores, Market Place, Licensed Victualler ,
Samuel Morris, of the Prince of Denmark Inn, New Catton, Licensed Victualler;
William Morris, of the Balloon Public House, Waterloo Road, Potato Merchant and Licensed Victualler;
Robert David Bush, of 4, York Street, Unthanks Road, Music Master;
William Kemp, of Pitt Street, Shoe Manufacturer.

6thly. We report that the following persons have been proved at the said Trial to have been guilty of illegal practices, namely :—

The said William Morris;
Benjamin Corrick, of Colegate Street, Upholsterer;
James Spinks, of 10, Starling Place, Cabman.

7thly. We report that there is no reason to believe that corrupt or illegal practices have extensively prevailed at the said Election.

8thly. We report that the following persons have been proved to have knowingly suffered treating to take place, in reference to the Election, on their licensed premises, namely :—

Edwin Hartwell Corbyn, of the Walnut Tree Shades, Old Post Office Yard, Licensed Victualler;
John King, of the Bull's Head Inn, Ber Street, Licensed Victualler;
William Hewitt, of the Norwich Arms Inn, Ber Street, Licensed Victualler.

9thly. We report that the following persons, who have been reported by us as having been guilty of corrupt or illegal practices, have been furnished by us with Certificates of Indemnity, namely: the said William Atkinson, the said William Joseph Nightingale, the said William Morris, the said Robert David Bush, the said William Kemp, the said Benjamin Corrick, and the said James Spinks.

10thly. We report that the following persons, who have been reported by us as having been guilty of corrupt or illegal practices, have not been furnished by us with Certificates of Indemnity, namely: the said Charles Wiggers and the said Samuel Morris.

As witness our hands, this 29th day of March, 1886,
GEORGE DENMAN.
LEWIS CAVE.

And the said Certificate and Report were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

QUESTIONS.

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POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT—TELEGRAPH STATION AT ROSSLEA, CO. FERMANAGH.

MR. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is the fact that there is no telegraph station at Rosslea, county Fermanagh, which is the market town for a large and thickly populated district; is it true that, in sending telegrams, the people of this locality have to travel to Clones, a distance of several miles, at considerable expense and inconvenience; and, whether the Postmaster General will consider the advisability of establishing a telegraph office at this place?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The nearest telegraph station to Rosslea is Clones, which is five miles distant. The Postmaster General has recently had inquiry made, with a view of ascertaining whether he would be justified in establishing a telegraph office at Rosslea, and he regrets to find that the estimate of revenue falls very far short of the expense. It is, therefore, not in his power to establish an office there. It is in his power, however, to establish an office, if a guarantee is forthcoming. An offer to establish an office at a £49 guarantee has been made to the inhabitants.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY — DEFAULTING PENSIONERS—CASE OF JOHN DENASH.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a pensioner of the Irish Constabulary Force, named John Denash, who was discharged about three years ago, having obtained £500 as compensation for injury, and an annual pension of £46, has recently absconded from the county of Sligo, leaving a man named Thomas Hunt responsible as surety for the payment of a promissory note accepted by Denash, and in respect of which a decree has been obtained against Hunt for £49 12*s.* 3*d.*; whether Denash receives his pension at Liverpool; and, what steps will be taken to pay Hunt out of Denash's pension the amount of the decree?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Inspector General has no power to make any deductions from a pension towards payment of the pensioner's debts, except on the order of a Court of competent jurisdiction. This constable's address in Liverpool is known, and will be supplied to any of his creditors who may apply for it for the purpose of taking proceedings.

THE CURRENCY—BIMETALLISM.

Mr. J. F. HUTTON (Manchester, N.) asked Mr. Chanecllor of the Exchequer, Whether he has received information that, on the 22nd instant, the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester at a special meeting at the Town Hall, passed the following Resolution:—

> "Without committing the Chamber to any opinion on the question of Bimetallism, it is, in the opinion of this Chamber, desirable that a Royal Commission or Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the present relative position of gold and silver, and their use as money throughout the world;"

and, whether, considering the important and urgent interests involved in this question, he will endeavour to ascertain from the Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade when a Report will be presented on the currency question?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby), in reply, said, this was a very difficult and complicated question, and, as he understood, would form one of the questions the Royal Commission would investigate. As they had only just begun to inquire into it, he did not think he could put any pressure on them to facilitate their work.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—MOUNTBELLEW UNION.

Mr. HARRIS (Galway, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true that the clerk, who is also returning officer of the Mountbellew Union (Mr. Bartholomew Riely), refused to issue voting papers to the electors in the Mountbellew division of said union, and by so doing prevented Mr. Thomas Higgins from proceeding with his canvass for the Poor Law guardianship of that division; and, whether the reason assigned by Mr. Riely was that Mr. Higgins was under age, and is it a fact that Mr. Higgins denied this allegation, and stated before the Mountbellew Board of Guardians on the 10th instant, he was in a position to prove that he was over the statutory age, twenty-one years; and, if so, will the Government inquire into the truth of these opposite statements, and give redress to Mr. Higgins if they find he has been unjustly disqualified from seeking the position of Poor Law guardian?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It is correct that objection was made to the nomination and election of Mr. Higgins, on the ground, amongst others, that he was not of full age. As it appeared from the official register in the custody of the clerk, that Mr. Higgins was not yet 21 years of age, the clerk allowed the objection. The Local Government Board have no information of what Mr. Higgins may have stated; but they are of opinion that the clerk was right in accepting the evidence of the official record.

POST OFFICE—REGISTERED TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESSES.

Mr. LANE (Cork Co., E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he could recommend the Postmaster General to adopt the word "Parliament" as a registered telegraphic address in the telegraph offices of the United Kingdom, for messages sent to Members attending at Westminster, and in substitution for the words "House of Commons, London?"

Viscount GRIMSTON asked, Whether the time of the Post Office officials could not be further saved by the adoption of an abbreviation of the word Parliament to "Parlt.?"

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): For the reasons which I stated in reply to a Question of the hon. Member for Northampton, it is, in the opinion of the Postmaster General, undesirable to extend the system of registered addresses for inland messages. "House Commons, London" (three words), preceded by the name of the Member, is a sufficient address without being registered, and the adoption of the word "Parliament" instead of the words "House Commons" would only save one word, while it might create confusion by including both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, for it would, of course, apply to the House of Lords. The Postmaster General has, however, the question of telegrams to both Houses under his consideration; and the suggestion of the noble Viscount that "Parliament" should be written "Parlt." will, no doubt, receive consideration.

IRELAND—LOANS TO LANDLORDS AND OCCUPIERS—RETURN OF AMOUNTS OUTSTANDING AND REMISSIONS.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, in the event of the Return asked for by the honourable Member for the Tyneside Division being given, the amounts lent and the remissions granted to owners of land and occupiers of land respectively, as well as the amounts due and outstanding from owners and occupiers of land respectively, and the amounts of loans and of remissions due, the famine of 1846 to 1849, and the distress of 1879 to 1881, will be separately shown?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The hon. Member for Tyneside (Mr. Albert Grey) has not moved for a Return. He is asking a Question. I will answer that Question on the 6th of April, and I will answer the Question of the hon. Member for South Sligo (Mr. Sexton) at the same time, if he will put it on the Paper.

MENAI BRIDGE—LETTING OF THE TOLLS.

CAPTAIN VERNEY (Bucks, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Menai Bridge tolls are now let by public auction; if not, when was the letting by public auction discontinued, and why; and, what steps are now taken to secure the highest bidder?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The tolls of the Menai Bridge have not been let by auction since 1872, owing to the disturbance which took place at the last auction on April 8, 1873, and to reports as to the character and pecuniary position of the persons who attended the auction. The tolls were, therefore, in 1873, let to the present tenant, Mr. Greenwood, for a term of three years. In 1877 it was again decided, for similar reasons, not to submit the tolls to public auction; but tenders were invited from six well-known lessees of tolls. Mr. Greenwood's tender was the highest; he was again accepted as tenant, since which date it has been deemed desirable from time to time to continue his tenancy for periods of three years up to June 1, 1888.

SCIENCE AND ART—BETHNAL-GREEN MUSEUM.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If, seeing that Thursdays are generally becoming early closing days in retail shops and wholesale establishments, the Government will consent to open the Bethnal Green Museum on Thursday evenings, for the use and enjoyment of the employés thus released from business; and, whether, seeing that the number of students on Wednesdays are under fifty, the Government will consent to open the Museum as a free day on Wednesdays?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Science and Art Department are quite willing to open Bethnal Green Museum on Thursday evenings, in lieu of Tuesday evenings, as at present, if the inhabitants of Bethnal Green are in favour of the change. The question of opening the Museum free of charge on Wednesday is at present under the consideration of the Science and Art Department.

TRADE AND COMMERCE—THE NEWHAVEN AND DIEPPE BOATS.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether, in view of the fact that the French Government have recently brought pressure to bear upon "Chemin de Fer de l'Oest," and, through them, upon the Brighton and South Coast Railway Company, to change the present system, which has prevailed for years past, of manning with English officers and crews certain steamers trading between Newhaven and Dieppe, in favour of entirely French crews, whereby some sixty English officers and men will be discharged and deprived of their livelihood, contrary to the wishes and desires of the said Railway Companies, he will cause an inquiry to be instituted; and, if the facts as alleged are substantiated, he will make a representation to the French Government, with a view to the said demand being withdrawn, considering the large number of merchant officers and seamen unable to find employment at the present time in our Home Ports?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. **Mundella**) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Board of Trade have heard nothing whatever of the matter referred to in the hon. Member's Question; nor is it a matter that would be likely to come under our notice. I have requested the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company to give me any information they can upon the subject.

CRIMINAL LUNATICS—DISCHARGE OF STRAIN, WILSON, LONGMAN, AND JARVIS FROM COLNEY HATCH.

Mr. MORGAN HOWARD (Camberwell, Dulwich) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, What are the grounds upon which it is proposed to discharge from the Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum four criminal lunatics (Strain, Wilson, Longman, and Jarvis) with a view to converting them into pauper lunatics; whether, in the absence of contribution from the Treasury towards their maintenance, the effect of such discharge will be to transfer from the Crown to the county, at the expense of the latter, the cost of maintenance of these criminal lunatics; and, whether it is in the contemplation of the Treasury to contribute towards the maintenance of these persons until the expiration of their respective sentences?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. **Childers**) (Edinburgh, S.): In reply to the hon. and learned Member, I beg to say that, having satisfied myself that the four men—Strain, Wilson, Longman, and Jarvis—ought not properly any longer to be treated as criminal lunatics in Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum, I ordered their discharge, in the exercise of a discretion which has been vested in the Secretary of State by the Act of 1884. The effect of their discharge will be, as the hon. and learned Member's Question infers, to throw the cost of their maintenance on to the local funds. There will be no Treasury contribution, as there are no sentences to expire, none of these persons having been convicted, but having all become lunatic before they were tried.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—BOATS OF PASSENGER SHIPS.

Captain PRICE (Devonport) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is the fact that the Union Passenger Steamships, some of the Orient Line, and all Her Majesty's Troopships, carry sufficient boats for all on board, with due regard to the safe navigation of the vessel, to the rapid lowering of the boats, and to their safe carriage in bad weather; and, whether the Board of Trade will consider the advisibility of enforcing better provision for boat accommodation in passenger ships?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. **Mundella**) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Question of the hon. and gallant Member only appeared on the Notice Paper this morning, and I have not had time to ascertain the provisions made by the Union Steamship Company, the Orient Line, and Her Majesty's troopships with regard to boat accommodation. As regards the last part of the Question, I must remind him that the Board of Trade have only power to enforce the Statute Law, and to see that the boats required by the statutory scale are supplied and are efficient; and that is always done. As I have twice before stated to the House, I have appointed a Departmental Committee of practical men to inquire and report on the whole subject.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked, if the right hon. Gentleman would instruct the Committee to inquire into the practice of leaving the doors of the watertight compartments open during voyages; and into the strength and stability of those compartments, as they generally gave way when called into requisition?

Mr. MUNDELLA, in reply, said, this was a matter quite apart from the question of boats, and, he imagined, would come under the purview of the Royal Commission to inquire into the causes of loss of life at sea. He would inquire into the matter, and see that the attention of the Commission was drawn to it.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL SCHOOL.

Captain PRICE (Devonport) asked the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the Admiralty, as Trustees of Greenwich Hospital, have ever applied for a Government Grant in respect of the children educated at Greenwich Hospital School; and, if not, in what respect do its claims differ from those of other Endowed Schools?

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. R. W. Duff) (Banffshire): No application has been made for a Government grant. The boys are understood to be under training for the Navy, and there would therefore be difficulty in complying with the requirements of the Education Department.

Captain PRICE asked, Whether it is a fact that the Admiralty give a bonus of £25 to the boys' training ships in the Thames, and at Liverpool, for every boy entered in the Royal Navy from those Institutions; and, why they do not give the same for every boy entered from Greenwich School, where the training is far superior?

Mr. R. W. DUFF: The bonus of £25 is given by the Admiralty in respect only of such boys from the mercantile training ships as are able to pass for first-class boys within six weeks of joining the Navy. There is a saving to the Crown by each of these boys being so far trained before he enters the Navy. In the case of Greenwich Hospital School, the boys when sent are not sufficiently advanced to enable them to pass for first-class. It is not considered that there is sufficient reason in these circumstances to ask the Treasury to sanction a grant, more especially as one of the objects of Greenwich Hospital is to encourage boys to adopt a seafaring life.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES—A ROYAL COMMISSION.

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in the interests of the working classes, and in view of the information recently obtained on the subject, he will advise that a Royal Commission should be appointed with the object of inquiring into the condition of Friendly Societies, and the working of the Friendly Societies Acts?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby) (who replied) said: About 10 years ago there was an elaborate inquiry into this subject, and an Act was passed at the same time. I will make inquiries into the matter, as it would be a serious thing to institute a new inquiry after such a comparatively short interval of time. I should, however, be happy to hear from my hon. Friend his reasons for putting the Question, or if he has any fresh facts bearing upon the matter.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—ALLEGED ATTACK ON THE REV. MR. KEARNEY, DROGHEDA.

Mr. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he had seen a paper called *The Drogheda Conservative*, in the colums of which the attack upon the Rev. William P. Kearney was alluded to, and in which it was alleged the reverend gentleman had made light of the occurrence from the first; if the police had called upon Gardiner when making their inquiry, who was almost the only Protestant resident in a street in which there were about two hundred of Mr. Kearney's co-religionists, and had ascertained from Gardiner whether the priest had appealed to him, when he came bleeding to his door at midnight, thus, "You are not going to see me murdered, though I am not of your religion;" and that Gardiner had to escort, him, armed with a revolver, to near the railway station, where the priest resided; and that Gardiner's wife had to get a pool of blood washed from the hall floor of her house the following day, where Mr. Kearney had stood when taking refuge; and, if, on further inquiry by the police, these circumstances were found to be true, whether the priest would be prosecuted by the Government for perjury?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): This Question is put down for the first time to-day, and, as it necessitates local inquiries being made, I must beg the hon. Member to postpone it.

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): I suppose the right hon. Gentleman can say, without Notice, that a statement which is not made upon oath cannot be perjury?

[No reply.]

THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY (IRELAND)—ELECTION TO THE SENATE—DELIVERY OF VOTING PAPERS.

Mr. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What steps will be taken by the Dublin Post Office to ensure the safe transmission, and to record the safe delivery of voting papers in the election to the Senate of the Royal University of Ireland, to be declared on the 6th proximo, having regard to the belief among members of the University that, in a recent election, the whole of the voting papers filled up for the candidate declared to be defeated were not counted in the election; whether, in the said election in October last, in which Dr. Maguire, Trinity College, Dublin, was the candidate declared to have the majority of votes, the chief clerk at the office of the Royal University, Mr. J. E. Oram, part of whose duty it is to superintend the issue of voting papers, and the receipt of them from the voters, was himself a member of Dr. Maguire's Committee; and, who has the actual custody, and is responsible for the safe keeping, of the voting papers during the interval between their return by the electors and the counting of them at the public meeting of the University?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am informed that Mr. Oram, who is a graduate of the Royal University, and who was a member of Dr. Maguire's Committee, is only responsible for the issue of the voting papers on these occasions. From the time of their return until the opening of the papers to be counted, they are in the charge of the secretaries, and the secretaries alone are responsible for their safe keeping. On the particular occasion referred to, six papers arrived the day after the election; but the postmarks showed that there had been no delay in the Post Office, and that their late arrival was due to the fault of the senders. The secretaries state that they have never heard any belief expressed as to any impropriety or irregularity having taken place in connection with the late election, nor do they think that in fact any such did occur.

ALLOTMENTS EXTENSION ACT, 1883—THE CHARITIES OF KIRTON AND SWINESHEAD, LINCOLNSHIRE—ACTION OF THE TRUSTEES.

Mr. INGRAM (Boston) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether he is aware that, at inquiries recently held by one of the Charity Commissioners' inspectors into the condition of the charities of Kirton and Swineshead, both in Lincolnshire, it was found that the trustees, in spite of applications by the labourers, had neglected to put in force the Allotments Extension Act, 1882, and that generally the Act is a dead letter in Lincolnshire; whether he will assist the labourers to become tenants of allotments of charity lands by instructing the Charity Commissioners to issue a Circular to the various charity trustees in Lincolnshire, instructing them to give the necessary notices to quit to all tenants of lands available for allotment purposes before 6th April next; and, whether he is aware that, unless such notices are given before that date, the land will not be available to the labourers until 6th April 1888?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education has asked me to answer this Question for him. The Charity Commissioners have not as yet received the Report of their Inspector on the two inquiries mentioned, and are therefore not as yet aware of the facts of the case. The Report will probably be before them in the course of the week. The Commissioners cannot undertake to issue a general Circular, such as that suggested; but they are ready to investigate any particular case which is brought to their notice, and to use the powers with which they are invested to compel compliance with the law if necessary. It is the fact that land let on yearly tenancies from Lady Day would be in the conditions indicated in the last paragraph of the Question of the hon. Member; but the Charity Commissioners have no certain knowledge with regard to what land is in this condition.

MOTIONS.

—o—

PARLIAMENT—ORDER—BOARD OF SUPERVISION (SCOTLAND).

MOTION FOR RETURNS.

Mr. PRESTON BRUCE (Fifeshire, W.) (for Sir George Grant) moved for—

"Returns of the names and designations of the members of the Board of Supervision in Scotland, distinguishing such as are members ex officio; of the number of meetings of the Board relating to the Poor Law held during the years from 1876 to 1885, both inclusive; and, of the number of members present at each such meeting (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 304, of Session 1876)."

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, as a point of Order, whether it is right for one hon. Member to move for a Return which appears on the Paper in the name of another hon. Member?

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that the Return has received the consent of the Government, and is unopposed. It is, therefore, quite competent for one hon. Member to move for it, as an unopposed Return, on behalf of another hon. Member.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Then, Sir, will it be possible in the future for one hon. Gentleman to get another to move for an opposed Return which stands in his name?

Mr. SPEAKER: That would be a different case. I find that this Motion is made with the consent of the Government, and the Return is moved for as an unopposed Return.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: All Returns moved for at this hour are unopposed.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the Motion were opposed, or not granted as an unopposed Return, it would be necessary to postpone it until the close of the evening.

Motion *agreed to.*

INTERNATIONAL PENNY POSTAGE.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury), in rising to move a Resolution in favour of universal International Penny Postage, said: Sir, I rise to move—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived for the Government of this Country to open negotiations with other Governments, with a view to the establishment of a Universal International Penny Postage system."

I presume that it is unnecessary for me, Sir, in addressing the House on this subject, to say one word as to the immense advantages which Sir Rowland Hill's bold idea has conferred upon this country. The subject is worthy of eloquence to which I do not pretend. But it is obvious to every mind that, by the supply of a cheap, rapid, and trustworthy method of communication, not only have our people, high and low, enjoyed a means of continuous intercourse and fellowship with absent friends, not only have works of charity been facilitated, sympathies enlarged, and unity of feeling promoted, but, in addition, an incalculable stimulus has been given to trade and industry of every kind and degree. "Time is money," says the philosopher, and nobody assents more heartily to the proposition than the man of business. All this, I know, will be granted me. Now, Sir, in respect of the postal communication of this country with our Colonies and with foreign nations, there are new and distinct advantages to be secured, provided always, that the service is cheap, rapid, and trustworthy. I assert that it is, however, wanting in the first of these qualifications. And I further assert that the distinct advantages to which I have referred as attainable are, to a large extent, sacrificed. These are, first, the promotion of cousinly feeling with the millions of Englishmen dwelling in our Colonies—I will say brotherly feeling —and, secondly, the creation and fostering of a feeling of solidarity and common interest among all the nations of the earth. I may pretend to speak with some degree of knowledge respecting one of the greatest, most prosperous, and, I may be permitted to add, most loyal of the British Colonies—Australia. To that country a large proportion of the more intelligent and deserving emigrants annually go from "the old country," while a much larger proportion goes to a second Continent, also peopled by men of English lineage, and speaking our mother tongue. Now, it is notorious that the mass of these exiles are persons in the humblest circumstances, who work for a daily wage, and calculate every farthing of expenditure as carefully as do their equally indigent re latives left behind in England or Ireland. What is the consequence? All communication between the divided members of the family is looked upon as an expensive indulgence, and economy too often begins with a practical casting off of all the ties that bind, or ought to bind, the emigrant to the land of his fathers. Sir, in these days of industrial crisis and Colonial extension, when envious glances mark the extent of our Empire, and keen men of business, commissioned as Consuls, rove up every creek with offers of a Protectorate and of Protectionist duties, it is surely no sound policy to set a tax of a deterrent character upon indulgence in that natural affection which is so considerable a factor in patriotism. Surely it were wiser to encourage the wanderer to retain a lively interest in all that relates to his native land, his village, and his cottage home. On the difficult question, whether the cheapening of postal communication with foreign countries would tend to the averting of those terrible conflicts which so frequently disgrace humanity in this 19th century of Christianity, I am not qualified to speak with authority. Yet surely, Sir, we may fairly assume that two peoples, in constant communication with one another, exchanging daily tens of thousands of letters, on business, and on social and political events, must be less ready to quarrel than two which remain as Nature placed them, in savage isolation. I now approach a subject which I suspect is uppermost in the minds of the opponents of this Motion—that of the cost of transmission. I will here lay down what may seem to financiers in this House a somewhat startling proposition. I hold that the State has no right to make a profit out of the Post Office. A large part of the business of life is now absolutely dependent on the Postal Service. Probably half the letters sent are business letters; and another very large share is sent by persons of small means, who have many stern inducements to take care of their pence. In other words, one-half of your postal revenue is derived from a tax on the machinery of trade, and another large share from the poorest class of citizens. This is practically a tax on commerce. Whether the merchant pays the money at the Custom House, or at the Post Office, is all the same to him. A paternal Government allows the foreigner to introduce his goods duty free to compete with home products, but lays a tax, through the Post Office, on the British exporter. The true principle, I maintain, is for the State to encourage, by a moderate contribution, those operations of commerce, in the initial stage, which ultimately furnish work to English workers, and thus benefit the entire community. The State should, secondly, abstain from discouraging friendly intercourse between our home-keeping citizens and their kinsmen and friends beyond the seas, or even between Englishmen and Frenchmen, Germans or Russians. There can be no objection to the principle of this "moderate contribution," for you have practically admitted it by paying subsidies to several of the transoceanic mail lines; and the other day you voted £380,000 for a West African cable subsidy. Let us abandon half-measures. Your subsidies pass unnoticed, for few persons perceive the ultimate beneficial operation of them. But confer a substantial reduction in the cost of postage as a palpable, immediate benefit on the community, and you will reap a harvest of universal gratitude, not only among Englishmen, but wherever the English tongue is spoken. But it may be urged, in view of the operations of the Postal Union—of which I would speak with the utmost gratitude—other nations must have something to say to this scheme. Granted; it is for that very reason that I have cast my Resolution in its present shape. I have no doubt that the inhabitants of other lands will be as willing as Englishmen to enjoy a cheap Postal Service. Let Her Majesty's Government propose a Conference, or an extraordinary meeting of the Postal Union, or adopt any other procedure which, in their judgment, may be best. It will, doubtless, be necessary to make elaborate calculations as to the amounts of the initial loss of Revenue to be respectively borne by the several States. But these calculations are not more difficult than those already completed by the Members of the Union. I shall now ask the indulgence of the House while I quote some statistics and read a few brief extracts from letters received from representative men. The profit now derived from the Post Office is almost £3,000,000 sterling per annum; but the Postmaster General alleges that

that profit is all made at home, and that there is a loss on foreign business. Surely that is an argument in favour of foreign penny postage. Profit made in one direction should be applied to balance losses in another. The revenue from the General Post Office in 1875 was £7,418,324, and the net profit £2,534,306. The revenue last year had risen to £10,053,457, and the net profit to £2,932,267, an increase of more than £2,500,000 in revenue, and nearly £400,000 in profit. I shall now, with your permission, point out some of the anomalies in the present system. In the first place, the price charged for the conveyance of letters to Australia is 6*d.* per letter of half-an-ounce in weight, or no less than £1,792 per ton. There are no post-cards to Australia. In the second place, the cost of the postage of a newspaper weighing 4 ozs. to the ends of the earth is only 1*d.* A letter of the same weight would cost 4*s.* We might send eight letters for 1*d.* But we offer the Government 8*d.* for the eight letters, for it is only suggested that one letter should be sent for 1*d.* Thirdly, the cost of carriage by a first-class steamer is only 40*s.* per ton, or 4⅗ lbs. for 1*d.* to Australia. The Postal Authorities might pay the steamship owners 1*s.* per lb. At 1*d.* per letter, 32 letters would cost the public 2*s.* 8*d.* The Postal Authorities would then have 1*s.* 8*d.* for the cost of delivery, &c. Fourthly, the French Government carries a post-card from, say, Calais to New Caledonia—1,000 miles beyond Australia—for 1*d.* Fifthly, the Post Office charges 2½*d.* for carrying a letter from, say, Folkestone to Boulogne—a distance of about 32 miles by sea; and only 1*d.* for carrying it to the Orkneys—nearly all the way by rail—a distance of 750 or 800 miles. On this subject one of my correspondents says—

> "If it be worth the while of the French Government to take so much trouble, and go to a little expense for the sake of the few pokey Colonies which it has been left for them to acquire, what shall we say of the obligations of the English Government, with whole continents for Colonies, and a population of 300 millions of possible correspondents through the post?"

But is it certain that there will be a loss to the Postal Service in consequence of the reduction which I advocate? As bearing upon this question, let us take the case of the great reduction of postage in 1839. In the year 1839, there were carried or delivered in the United Kingdom in all 82,500,000 letters. In the year 1840, there were delivered in the United Kingdom 169,000,000; and there were delivered last year no less than 1,360,000,000, or 16 times as many as in 1839. Assuming, as I am fairly entitled to do, that the number of letters now carried at a prohibitive price by the Post Office for transmission abroad would be only six times greater than at present, the Revenue would be the same as it is now. But I set no such bounds on the communicativeness of the race. I would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, with confidence, in view of his most recent experience, whether, given a 1*d.* postal rate, even with a sea to be crossed, and long railway journeys to make, the epistolary tendencies of mankind can be "cribb'd, cabined, and confined." Among letters received, the Consul General of Denmark writes—

> "Between European countries near to each other, as, for instance, England and France, or Germany, the present charge of 2½*d.* is somewhat high, and might with great advantage be reduced. As regards Denmark, she would naturally follow the lead of the great European countries in such a matter, and would, I feel sure, take part in an International Conference, and cordially co-operate in any practical scheme which would further develop the great reform of Sir Rowland Hill."

An American gentleman writes from New York—

> "A penny post between England and America would pay well. It is not more expensive to send a letter from London to New York than from London to Scotland."

A well-known emigration agent writes—

> "One advantage of your scheme will be that the friends of the emigrant, instead of writing quarterly, will write weekly; and a great body of persons, who never think at present of buying a costly foreign postage stamp, will develope a surprising interest in men and things abroad."

A gentleman connected with an Agent General's office writes—

> "It will be said that the Colonial postage service will not pay, and that large losses are already borne. The present results are from bad management. Last year Australia sent and received from England 12,000,000 letters, 10,000,000 newspapers, and 1,500,000 packets, at a cost of £270,000. With this enormous subsidy, if the Colonies and the Mother Country would unite, we could have a first-class mail service to and from Australia. From one to three first-class mail steamers now leave Australia every week for England."

The manager of the Australian Joint

Stock Bank, one of our largest institutions, writes—

> "I am entirely in accord with you as to the desirability of a universal penny post."

A well-known Australian writes—

> "I wish the Postmaster General could, in spirit, transport himself into some rough, log-built shanty on the fringe of a virgin forest, where a knot of shaggy, brown-faced men are gathered in a circle to hear a letter from home read aloud. If he could mark the keen interest on every face, the rapt attention, the lively interest displayed in the history, health, and doings of their comrade's family circle at home in England, perhaps even the passing shade of envy at his happiness, and remember that such happiness would be returned a thousandfold, when the wanderer's reply reached his friends at home, I am not sure that his official sternness would not for a passing moment relax, and he might think more favourably of your Motion."

A leading merchant of the City of London writes to me as follows:—

> "There is no doubt the sympathy of the whole commercial world will be with you in your patriotic endeavour of obtaining a uniform and cheaper international postage, which would greatly facilitate commercial intercourse and considerably reduce office expenses, which, especially in these hard times, form a heavy item."

It should here be pointed out that a letter can be conveyed to Australia today as cheaply as it could have been conveyed to many parts of Great Britain and Ireland during Sir Rowland Hill's agitation. Mr. S. W. Silver, the emigrant's friend, writes—

> "I believe that nothing is more likely to foster that regard which exists between the various members that compose the British Empire than a uniform penny postage. With such rapid communication as now exists, all that is required is to neutralize the expense to the greatest possible degree to render the Union more facile."

The Portuguese Consul General also writes in favour of the proposal. The head of a large commercial firm in the City writes—

> "The State should look upon the Post Office as a merchant does on an advertisement. The day has passed when the State could tax advertisements. I calculate that the increase of letter writers strictly corresponds to the increased number of children now being educated. Quite an army of letter writers is now being drilled and taught all over the country. The increase in our correspondence with foreign countries, and with our Colonies, must therefore show a great increase during the next few years, fully compensating us for the largest possible expenditure foreseen by the Postmaster General."

The Consul General of Austria-Hungary writes—

> "I beg to assure you that I sincerely sympathize with the object you have in view; and I do not hesitate to think that the two difficulties you mention might be easily surmounted by an International Conference."

The well-known firm of W. and A. Gilbey, whose commercial transactions extend to every country in the world, writes—

> "We unhesitatingly and emphatically state that not only would such a result be beneficial to our trade, but it must undoubtedly tend to the advantage of British commerce generally. At the same time, it would greatly cement that international good-will, so desirable at all times to cultivate, from every point of view. It would also without doubt cause an increased revenue to the Postal Department in a very short period of time."

The fact should be borne in mind that, at the present time, Australia only sends on average four letters per head of the population per year to England; while among themselves the people of England exchange 40 letters per head. The Australian Governments say the British Government will not consent to reduce the cost of letters, on the ground that the British Government would be opposed to the proposal; but the Australian people are really anxious for the reduction. I therefore simply ask for negotiations to be opened up. Now I approach a portion of my subject on which imaginative powers of the highest order would not be wasted. To such powers, as I have before stated, I make no pretension. But I am somewhat consoled for the consciousness of my intellectual poverty in this respect from having observed that, as a rule, flights of imagination are not followed in this House with any great exhibition of interest or appreciation. I may be told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or by some less exalted authority in connection with our finances, that there are already very heavy drains upon the public purse, and that a policy of rigid retrenchment will be required to set it right. Sir, in view of the intention attributed to the Government to propose a loan of £100,000,000 or £200,000,000 sterling, in order to round off and complete the grand Irish policy of the First Lord of the Treasury, I shall, in case the Chancellor of the Exchequer uses the economical argument, observe with some curiosity the facial control of the right hon. Gentleman. Far be it from me to sneer at the sufferings of the loyal and unhappy class, the Irish landlords, for whose relief this vast expenditure is intended. I trust that they will duly receive this bounty, this "conscience money," of the First Lord of the Treasury, and that the loan will be punctually repaid. But, Sir, these are not the only deserving class of Her Majesty's subjects. Surely those who are carrying on the vast business of this country, who labour to maintain and to increase the wealth on which we are all, high and low, dependent, the merchants, artizans, and labourers engaged in commercial undertakings, deserve some consideration. Surely we can spare a moment's thought, and even, if need be, a little money, to soften the rigour of exile to those millions of our countrymen beyond the sea, who have not this happiness which we enjoy, of dwelling in the land of their fathers, the land that still contains those dearest to them by the ties of nature and affection. Sir, I am afraid that the House has perhaps been too long detained by what I have said upon the consideration of a certain sentimental grievance affecting a limited, but resolute, class of Her Majesty's subjects. My excuse must be, that coming into this Assembly from the great Southern Island, which is the largest and among the most lustrous of the jewels in the Imperial Crown, I naturally utter grievances of which Englishmen in that distant latitude are painfully conscious, but of which only a faint, occasional echo may have previously reached your ears. Doubtless, objections will be raised to the proposal on the score of its boldness, its innovating nature, its ingratitude, and so on. I make this appeal, however, not to the cold, calculating economists on the Treasury Bench, but to the hundreds of millions who own our gracious Sovereign's sway. I ask them to make intercourse between their sundered coasts as easy as speech, as free as air. I entreat them to tolerate no longer this unworthy profit on the expression of their fraternal sympathies, and on the natural development of their trade. And I foretell that this reform, when it is ours—as it soon must be—will confer a widespread benefit on commerce, it will bring new happiness into myriads of English homes here, in this country, and scattered by the brimming margent of the Australasian seas, over pathless praries in America, over trackless plains in Australia, and along glancing Equatorial streams, and it will form the last and not the least tenacious of the ties that bind our Colonies to their beloved Mother Country. I beg to move the Resolution standing in my name.

MR. H. G. REID (Aston Manor), in seconding the Motion, said: I should not have consented to occupy the place I do now, with so many here who could more fitly, if not with greater sincerity, perform the task, had it not been that for many years I have been identified outside with the movement which has culminated to-day in the moderate and eminently practical Motion submitted by my hon. Friend on the opposite side of the House. And it is some satisfaction to take a part, however modest, in a discussion which can be carried on without regard to creed, class, or Party considerations. This is no new agitation. It dates back in its origin to the time when we had secured the penny postage in this country, after a brief, but somewhat bitter, contest. The history and results of that great change have a bearing upon the subject now before the House. The benefits of cheap and frequent postal facilities need no comment here; in every respect, commercial and social, they are recognized—written in every counting-house, and engraven in every home. I see to-day that, in some quarters, doubt is cast on the wisdom, and even the safety, of this proposal. The old story is being repeated. It can scarcely be credited that, little more than 40 years ago, this beneficent scheme was denounced in Parliament and in the Press as revolutionary and dangerous, certain to involve enormous loss of Revenue, to disturb existing postal arrangements, and cause dispeace—one high authority actually describing it as being nothing less than "sedition made easy." All these pessimist prognostications have been signally belied, as like predictions in respect to a wide extension of the system will, I venture to predict, be falsified by experience. For a time there must be some loss first, as there was a large sacrifice when this country made the change. The sacrifice extended over only a few years, although in one year at least it exceeded £1,000,000 sterling; whilst at present, as you have heard, our clear postal revenue or profit is at the rate of nearly £3,000,000 per annum, and business and friendship have been incalculaby benefited and strengthened, as they certainly would be under a widely-extended scheme of International Penny Postage. I have been informed, within the last few minutes, on reliable authority that, in addition to the large profit realized, the Post Office charges the cost of the new buildings throughout the country to revenue; so that there is a huge sum invested which, in any ordinary business, would be set down as forming part of the capital account. Even if there were, at the outset, some losses —a small percentage off the handsome profit—the sacrifice would be made in a good and noble cause. Look at the facts for a moment. When many of the Members of this House were young men the then Postmaster General was protesting against the new departure, because, as he alleged, the number of letters delivered in the United Kingdom only averaged 170,000,000 per annum; and it would, he argued, require the improbable number of 416,000,000 even to meet the deficiency that would be created in the Revenue. As indicating how surely extended postal facilities multiply the number of communications, the letters delivered in the United Kingdom in 1863 were 642,000,000, and last year they exceeded the unprecedented figure of over 1,360,000,000. These fears and these facts are equally notable to us; for, although the conditions differ considerably, they are sufficiently alike to warrant the conclusion that similar results would follow the extension which is now submitted to the judgment of the House. One argument used in favour of adopting in this country a penny postage was, that whilst the population had increased, the revenue had been stagnant; and the same applies in this case, that although the population of the world has enormously increased, the postal deficit remains virtually the same. Take any department of the Post Office —the Savings Bank, the book and newspaper post; or look at the growth of the halfpenny post-card, in the last 10 years, from 87,000,000 to over 160,000,000 per annum. Even the recently-established Parcels Post shows a wholesome development, and is so satisfactory to the authorities, that arrangements are now in progress at the Post Office for extending the system to our Colonies and to foreign countries. There is, in our postal system, no finality, and the authorities at home evince a desire and capacity to adapt themselves and their plans to new requirements as they are asked. It is significant, in reference to the present discussion, that, after to-morrow, a limited form of International Penny Postage will actually be introduced, by which any person can send a post-card, with a duplicate card attached for reply, so that, for example, whereas a letter to France costs at present 2½*d.*, and a reply from France costs the same amount, henceforth, by means of the reply post-card, the two will only cost 2*d.*, or less than half the rate for letters, which do not, on the average, involve a larger expense for carriage than do the post-cards. The plan has been in existence for some time, in the Irish Service and in other parts, and so workable and successful has it been, that the system will now be extended to all countries embraced in the Postal Union. All this indicates the spirit of the time—that we are silently preparing for the greater change; and it shows how almost, without exception, cheapness, regularity, and frequency of communication lead to a larger demand—a steadily increasing number of letters, and a relative improvement in the net revenue. And it is in accordance with the general rule—given a sufficiently numerous constituency and an article universally required, and the cheaper it is made the more will it be taken, and the greater will be the relative or cumulative profits made. During recent years our shipping accommodation with other countries has immensely improved, augmenting the volume of trade and intercommunication, and there is keen competition for trade, of which unrestricted advantage should be taken; and it only needs a capable hand, backed up by the authority of Parliament, to introduce and successfully establish an extension which would give an immediate and much-needed stimulus to trade, and tend to strengthen friendly international intercourse. We may safely take example from the past, and push forward to the one legitimate and assuredly ultimate attainment in a uniform Penny Postage to every part of the world. It is interesting to remember that, when the last decisive effort was made to induce our Government and the

Post Office Authorities to adopt the uniform penny system, a powerful deputation waited upon the then Postmaster General, and when it was breaking up, one whose voice has often been heard in this House leaped upon a chair and made a final appeal. It was Mr. Daniel O'Connell, and he said—

> "One word for Ireland! My countrymen are poor, and if you shut the Post Office to them, which you now do, you shut out warm hearts and generous affections from home, kindred, and friends."

This last appeal was effectual, and the words have a vastly wider scope in the light of the proposal which we have now made—the adoption of a system which would bring the nations together and "make the whole world kin." The reform and extension of the postal system has been a long and weary struggle against prejudice and hide-bound custom, and not infrequently stupid officialism. It is instructive to note the various stages of the movement, and the advances that have been slowly made in the direction of cheapness and efficiency. Thirty-three years ago, a restricted effort was made in this country for securing cheaper postage to our own Colonies; and after years of effort and agitation a uniform rate of 6*d.* was conceded. On the morning that that concession culminated *The Times*, which has for half-a-century consistently and courageously advocated every postal extension, made this historic declaration—

> "We have this day to announce a step which, simple and unpretending as it may seem, is really a greater move towards a complete unity of our independent Empire than the most splendid conquest, or the largest annexation."

The writer added this stinging comment—

> "Considering how much there is that is questionable in our dominion, in its means and its results, it is satisfactory to find one remedy and one result of undoubted advantage to the whole human race—namely, that we draw mankind together, and bring the whole human family, so to speak, withing hearing distance."

If these utterances are true—and they are true—in reference to the high and oppressive rate of 6*d.*, they are infinitely more forceful to-day as applied to the proposal which would bring inestimable postal privileges within the reach of all, even the poorest, in every clime. These words should rouse and stimulate us to carry unflinchingly forward this beneficent work. Since then, negotiation and agitation have accomplished much; but the topstone has yet to be placed on the magnificent postal system which, year by year, slowly, but surely, we have been building up. It would be instructive to trace the various stages and concessions in this postal record. I shall only remind the House that 25 years ago a new and important departure was taken which produced results that will yet bear rich fruit. The agitation—a kind of mission service—went on for years both in this country and in America, and Congress was pressed to consider the question, with the outcome that a definite and permanent policy was adopted. An authoritative reporter, writing from the American House of Representatives, places on record this remarkable passage—

> "This is a matter which meets with the approval of all commercial classes in the United States, and its adoption has been repeatedly urged. The Postmaster General is an advocate of cheap rates of international postage. He states that in negotiating the present Postal Treaty between this country and Great Britain which has come into operation, the United States proposed and urged a further reduction of the rate of international letter postage, but without success, the British Post Office declining any reduction. He (the Postmaster General) is really anxious further to reduce the present rates of postage to the lowest practicable standard, and his successor in President Grant's Cabinet will do the same thing, that being the American policy."

And a high authority, *The New York Commercial Advertiser*, commenting on the subject, makes this indictment—

> "The real opposition to the ocean penny postage is in the British Post Office. Our Postmaster General is really for it."

The spirit of our Post Office has been liberalized since that date; and I would say here that the officials, and especially the able and courteous Secretary, are always ready to give information and aid in any effort, so far as they are able, to remove grievances and extend our postal conveniences both at home and abroad. It must be admitted, however, that in respect to cheap ocean postage, the United States have taken the honourable place of pioneer. We cannot forget one distinguished American who rendered priceless services—one who in his later years worthily represented his own country in the Midland counties of England—I refer to Elihu Burritt—a name revered in this and every other civilized country. So long ago as 1842, stimulated by the bold and brilliant example of our own Rowland Hill, he issued a pamphlet, urging on our country and his own, the unspeakable blessings of what he for the first time, designated an Ocean Penny Postage. In that pamphlet—now in the British Museum—he uttered sentiments which, in one form or another, were repeated in his speeches when he subsequently visited this country. He would set forth the simplicity of the proposal and the benefits sure to follow the adoption of the beneficent scheme, and say—

> "To thousands and tens of thousands of families in town, in village, and in hamlet, the dispensation of the penny post comes almost as gratuitously and silently as the morning dew upon the flowers that breathe and blush in the winds."

["Oh, oh!"] Someone cries "Oh!" but it cannot be ignored that sympathy is one of the most potent factors in all human progress. At other times he would show how commerce would be promoted, and point with moving pathos to the white-winged messengers coming over the quivering waters, whispering words of love and good-will to millions bound together by ties of brotherhood. To the far-reaching foresight, nobleness of purpose, and simple eloquence of Elihu Burritt, we owe largely the consensus of opinion in postal advancement which unquestionably exists in this country and in other countries. He asked for much less than would now satisfy us; indeed, not much more than has actually been attained, so far as the United States are concerned. But he ever urged that there is no standing still, that the liberalizing process must go steadily on; and I well remember, when he was addessing an assembly of some 2,000 or 3,000 on this subject, that he asked those present who had business or friendly connections with distant countries, and considered cheap postage to be a boon, to hold up their hands. I see yet the forest of hands that arose; and I unhesitatingly say that, were meetings held to-night in every town and hamlet throughout the country, there would be the same unanimity, enthusiasm, and determination to secure this boon. Think of the millions that have gone out from Scotland, that have gone out from parts of England and Wales, or that have been driven from every part of Ireland to people other countries—many of them poor, and all still cleaving with warm feelings to their native land, and surely it would be worthy of this Parliament to do something to bridge over the distance and bring the peoples more closely together. Let me say that since these stirring times the interest is not dead. Within the past 10 or 12 days I have received many communications from all parts of the country, and also from over the sea, every one expressing a common sentiment. In some, it is urged that a national agitation should be commenced, with the view of giving full expression to the feelings of the people. I trust that will not be necessary, and that the Government will see its way to comply with this most reasonable request. We have no desire to force its hand or precipitate change—no wish to reduce the Revenue, or incur additional Expenditure. What we want is to take now one practical step, in order to show the feeling of this country, and to test the feelings of other countries. We want, after all these years of discussion and agitation, to make a beginning, and the time seems opportune. The American Consul in the Midlands writes that the effort to be made in this House to increase international postal facilities merits commendation. From the Far West of Canada comes a message, and it is this—

> "We are one race, each with our own Home Government, and both loyal to one Sovereign. Let us now extend our business helps, and bind the kinship more closely by the inestimable privilege of an ocean penny postage."

More remarkable still, a cable message reaches me through one of the chief agencies from New York, and it runs thus—

> "*The World*, which has the largest circulation of any newspaper in this great city, commenting editorially on the Motion before the British Parliament, says it is a matter in which the American people are vitally interested; and the writer calls for similar and immediate action in Congress. The movement (adds the telegram) awakens great interest and universal satisfaction on this side of the water, and is vigorously endorsed as essential to the commercial prosperity of both nations."

This is a welcome voice, and to us full of significance. It indicates that the conditions are exceptionally favourable for opening negotiations. The widespread interest in this country, the spirit of liberty and enterprize in our own Post Office, the open-hearted response from some of the Colonies and from the

United States, the desire for closer federation, the need for doing something that might help to overcome the depression in trade—all are singularly favourable for entering on the course which the Motion before the House recommends. Whatever happens now, we shall, at any rate, make our protest, and trust that this Parliament, fresh from the country, elected on a widely extended franchise, representing poor as well as rich, will do something speedily in the direction suggested—something to foster business, strengthen international friendship, and bring consolation and brightness into many a lowly and loyal home in this and other lands.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived for the Government of this Country to open negotiations with other Governments, with a view to the establishment of a Universal International Penny Postage system."—(*Mr. Henniker Heaton.*)

MR. JAMES HUTTON (Manchester, N.), in rising to move, as an Amendment—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived for the Government of this Country to take the necessary steps with a view to the establishment of a Penny Postage system throughout the British Empire,"

said, that although he rose for that purpose, he was fully in accord with the principle of the Resolution; but he could not go quite so far in favour of an international postage system as they did, in advocating a change which should at once extend to the whole world. To effect this many difficulties would have to be overcome, for the Government would have to enter into negotiations with something like 80 or 90 foreign countries to carry out the object of the Resolution; and this would lead, not only to difficulties, but also to very great delays. They had, at the present time, three different categories of foreign postage. They had the 2½*d.* postage to European countries and to the United States; the 4*d.* postage to countries in South and Central America; and a 5*d.* postage to China, Japan, and other Eastern countries; and he was afraid that the difficulties in negotiating with these countries would be so great that the Government would not be able to carry out the Resolution. The carriage of the mails was principally done by British ships, and yet there were no fewer than three different rates to China and Japan—the rate *viâ* Russia being 2½*d.*, by the United States 4*d.*, and by a British ship 5*d.* This was an injustice to the people and merchants of this country. Another great injustice to this country was the charging of what was really a differential postage on letters to the Colonies and British Possessions, and the Amendment he had moved was quite in accord with the view that had been expressed, that we should be able to communicate with the whole British Empire at the rate of 1*d.* per ½ oz. They had at present only one large and important Colony with which they could communicate at the 2½*d.* rate, and that was the Dominion of Canada, the only other British Possessions to which this rate applied being Gibraltar and those in the Mediterranean. When they came to the British Possessions of the West Indies, West Africa, and the Mauritius, they had to pay 4*d.* per ½ oz.; while the Post Office allowed any other country to send letters to these Possessions by British steamers at the rate of 2½*d.* per ½ oz. That was, he held, an injustice done by the Post Office to the British people. But a still greater injustice was done in the case of India. Under the present regulations, the people of this country had to pay 5*d.* per ½ oz. on letters, and 1½*d.* on newspapers of 4 ozs. to India; but every one of the European countries could send letters to India by British steamers for just half these prices. The present charges, therefore, were simply a differential duty on the trade and people of England. At the present time, a very strong feeling was rising up in this country against differential rates of every class — whether upon foreign trade, or in connection with the railways—and so long as an injustice was done to the British people, he held it was the duty of every Member of the House to support any movement which would bring about an equalization of the rates. But there was still another Colonial rate of postage, for they had to pay 6*d.* per ½ oz. on all letters to Australia and the Cape. This, he thought, was an excessive rate to pay for the transmission of letters to Australia, compared with those paid on letters to other countries about the same distance from England. But he moved the Amendment not only on the ground of the injustice done to the British people, but also on economic and patriotic grounds. The

House must recollect that something like 9-10ths of the correspondence of the world was carried in British ships and to British-speaking people. If foreign countries used British steamers for their mails, and sent their letters at a lower rate than we could, then either we paid too high a rate, or other countries paid too low a rate. In a Return presented only the other day to the House, it was distinctly shown that during the last 10 years the Post Office had been making a profit of £2,500,000 or £3,000,000 on the postal system; and, therefore, on economic grounds, he thought the British people should no longer be compelled to pay differential rates of postage. He might mention that in some cases British houses, to avoid these higher charges, habitually sent their letters to Italy and Germany to be posted there, in order to go by the same mails as they would have gone by from England, thus saving 1*d.* per ½ oz.; and he had himself sent letters to France which were there posted and sent back again to this country to go out to British Possessions, and he had saved money by this means. It was an anomaly that such a thing should be possible, and surely it was high time it was rectified; but, although strenuous efforts had been made with the Post Office for two years, merchants obtained no redress. It was a tax upon commerce to levy these higher rates on the correspondence carried on by the people of this country, and he trusted the Government would look into the matter and would see what could be done for their relief. They should cease to inflict upon the people of this country any differential rates in connection with their postage. He had mentioned the surplus which the Post Office had made in the last 10 years; but he looked upon it as a tax on education and civilization. On the still higher grounds of patriotism, could any measure better tend to bring about a unity of feeling than the establishment of a penny postage to all British Possessions and Colonies throughout the world? He felt convinced that the effect of such an action on the part of the House and the Government would not only be hailed with satisfaction and pleasure by every one of the British-speaking communities in the world, but would strengthen the union and the ties of affection between this country and every other part of Her Majesty's Dominions. He would conclude by moving the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

MR. MATHER (Salford, S.), in seconding the Amendment, said, that he was desirous that the debate should terminate in something practical. He did not think the Resolution would have that effect; but hoped that, by the adoption of the Amendment, the Government would be induced to take into consideration, and effect at once, the establishment of a penny postal system within the British Empire. He thought that by entering into negotiations to persuade all the nations of the world to adopt that proposal, a great loss of time would probably ensue; certainly some years would be occupied in making them see this matter in the same light as we did. We had, however, the British Dominions under our control, and there could be no doubt that the establishment of a penny postage between this country and the Dependencies would enormously increase our intimacy, and would encourage that idea of Federation which could be served in no better way than by increasing such ties. He rather regretted that his hon. Friend had not made his Amendment larger; and, instead of confining it to the British Colonies, had extended it to the whole English-speaking people of the world, so that they might all have the benefits of the penny postage. He believed it would not be at all difficult to persuade the American Government to come into closer relations with us on the question. They were becoming more and more our own kith and kin on the other side of the Atlantic; and, though their forms of Government were different, they were becoming daily closer to us in every relation. The closer they became the better for us and for them. He trusted that the Amendment would be accepted by the Mover of the Resolution. It was really a matter, however, to be dealt with by the Government. He acknowledged the force of the argument that, this being a question of fiscal arrangement, it should only be dealt with by the Government, and that any loss which might be incurred must be made up in some other way. Surely the profit obtained by the Post Office Department might be drawn upon to some extent, with the object of carrying out this proposal, and in order to show their sympathy with the Colonies. He hoped the Government would give the question their best attention, and that the lesser scheme suggested by his hon. Friend would gain their support and favour.

Amendment proposed,

> To leave out from the word "Country," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "to take the necessary steps with a view to the establishment of a Penny Postage system throughout the British Empire,"—(*Mr. James Hutton,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, that while he should be obliged to look at this matter with the eye of a cold, calculating economist, he could not refrain from expressing his strong sympathy with the motives and objects of both the Motion and the Amendment. He was sure that anything which could tend to strengthen the ties which subsisted, not only between this country and its Colonies, but between this country and all the nations of the world was a step which would meet with the approval not only of the House, but of all sections of the community. It was not to be supposed that he in any way dissented from the views put forward by hon. Members who had spoken with respect to the patriotic or commercial aspect of the question. It was his duty, however, to present to the House the facts of the case, after which it would be for the House to pronounce its judgment on the facts and figures which he would submit, and to say whether the time had arrived to carry out what would, no doubt, be a very great reform and boon if safely and wisely carried out. In order that the House might clearly understand the scope of the Motion, he would explain what our postal relations were with other countries and what they were with our own Colonies. The Postal Union practically comprised, with two notable exceptions, the whole postal world. All civilized nations, he thought he might say, in Europe and in America, and also in a portion of the East, belonged to the Postal Union. The only exceptions were our Australian Colonies, New Zealand, the South Pacific Colonies, and the South African Colonies. Practically, therefore, for all purposes of postal regulation and legislation, the world outside the British Empire, and a great part of the British Empire, were within the Postal Union. This Union consisted of Representatives of all countries belonging to it. They met at various fixed intervals, and they legislated internationally as to what was to be the rate of postage between all the countries which formed part of that Postal Union. There were no differential rates within the limits of that Union. The Congress or Convention of those Plenipotentiaries had assembled at Berne, Paris, and Lisbon, and the rates which were now being paid were fixed by them. Inside the Postal Union the charge was a uniform one of 2½*d.*, with a power to any country to charge another 2½*d.* in respect of sea communication where letters had to go beyond the seas. In addition to that they had post-cards inside the Postal Union, the prices varying from 1½*d.* to 2*d.* as the case might be. The hon. Member had referred to differential postal rates of 4*d.* and 5*d.* on letters to India. The English Post Office only charged the maximum amount upon letters which travelled to India by the expensive Brindisi route; letters by any other route being charged only 4*d.* He thought the House would agree that we had already made a great advance towards a cheap, speedy, and uniform service to all parts of the world at the 2½*d.* rate; and with regard to the objection that had been raised, he must say that if 1*d.* was charged for a letter from London to Croydon, 2½*d.* was certainly not an out-of-the-way charge for a letter to San Francisco. The Post Office Authorities were satisfied that the postal rates by no means worked unfairly for England, and they were of opinion that a great deal of discrepancy did not exist as between England and other countries. The question now arose whether this country lost or gained by the Postal Union. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution (Mr. Henniker Heaton) said that the Post Office was taxing the people both at home and abroad, and making a large profit. As a matter of fact, they were, on the contrary, making a heavy loss by this ocean service. The entire loss last year had amounted to £365,000, or £1,000 a-day. He would give the House a concrete illustration of the loss which they had to suffer. For the postal service between this country and India they paid a subsidy to the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company, for which the Company carried all the mails, the loss on the arrangement being borne proportionately by this country and India and the Colonies concerned. The result was, that last year the contribution which India had paid out of the Indian Revenue to make up the loss had been £68,000, while Ceylon paid £1,400, the Straits Settlements paid £6,000, and Hong Kong also £6,000. Therefore, with this rate of 5*d.* the mails were carried at a heavy loss, and subsidies had to be paid out of the Revenues of India and the Colonies concerned and the Imperial Exchequer. It was, then, hardly fair to talk of taxing commerce and making a profit. Then he came to the countries outside the Postal Union—namely, Australia, South Africa, and the South Pacific Colonies. He quite agreed with the hon. Member that it was of the last importance that they should have the freest and fullest communication with the Australian Colonies, and that they should have as complete and cheap, yet efficient, system of postage as possible; but they must look into the matter, and see whether they could alter it, and whether they could improve it. The present charge for a letter to Australia was 6*d.*, and for a newspaper 1*d.* The principal route was that by the East—by Brindisi and Ceylon. The Post Office carried the mails from England to Colombo; then the Australian Colony took them up, and carried them, at its own expense, from Colombo to Melbourne, or Sydney, or elsewhere. Of the charge of 6*d.* upon all outward letters from England to Australia, the English Post Office took 3½*d.* and Australia 2½*d.*, there thus being a slight difference in favour of this country. But, on the homeward letters, the Colony took the whole 6*d.*, and this country got nothing at all; so that the 3½*d.* received upon the outward letter had to cover the whole cost of the outward letter and also of the reply. What became of that 3½*d.*? For transit through France and Italy they paid 1½*d.* for each letter each way, and therefore they had only ½*d.* left for the inland post, and not one farthing for the sea service. The net loss to the English Post Office last year under this head had been £60,216; and he believed that the Australians complained of the very heavy loss to which they also were subjected, and were much more opposed than we were to any change which would impose a heavier burden upon them. There was another route which was popular for some reasons—by San Francisco. In the case of letters sent by that route 4*d.* out of the 6*d.* was paid to the Colonies, and for the remaining 2*d.* the Post Office had to take the letters to San Francisco, and the loss was estimated at £11,879 a-year. In the case of the South African and Natal mails, the Cape and Natal provided their own packet service, the Post Office taking 2*d.* and the Colonies 4*d.* Upon homeward letters, however, the Colonies took the whole 6*d.* Upon the Canadian Post there was no loss, as Canada paid its own way. The whole loss of £365,000 a-year was made up as follows:—

Service.	Payment to Company.	Contributions towards the Cost of the Service.	Estimated Receipts for Sea Postage.	Estimated British Loss on the Service.
	£	£	£	£
East India and China	360,000	India ...... 68,000 Ceylon .... 1,400 Straits Settlements .... 6,000 Hong Kong 6,000	55,000	223,600
West Indies and Mexico	84,000	......	27,000	57,000
North America :—				
Queenstown to New York ..	97,000	......	42,000	55,000
Halifax, Bermuda, and Jamaica	17,500	......	200	17,300
South America :—				
Brazil, River Plate, and Chili ..	14,100	......	10,600	3,500
Panama and Valparaiso ..	3,400	......	1,400	2,000
West Coast of Africa	11,800	......	5,200	6,600
Totals ..	587,800	81,400	141,400	365,000

Then came the question of what their loss would be by this scheme. He was informed by competent accountant officers of the Post Office, who had had great experience in these matters, that the estimated loss, if the Motion of the hon. Member was carried, would be somewhere between £400,000 and £500,000 more, in addition to the loss which was at present sustained. Speaking upon a similar question, a good many years ago, Sir Rowland Hill had stated that, in his judgment, unless under exceptional circumstances, each branch of the Post Office ought to be self-supporting. So far from that being the case now, he (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) thought that the House could not fail to see that, at any rate, the branch he had referred to was carried on at a heavy loss. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Aston Manor (Mr. Reid) remarked that to put a tax upon correspondence was to tax civilization; that we had no right to tax letters; that they were taxing education; and that the State had no right to make a profit of the transmission of letters. That was a fair subject for discussion, if the question of the Post Office were being debated for the first time in Parliament. But it had become part of our fiscal system; it had grown with our strength, and the difficulty now was what to raise in its stead if it were once displaced. He would quote the figures from the Post Office Report, which would speak for themselves. In 1875-6, the profits from the Post Office had been £2,500,000; in 1876-7, £2,400,000; in 1877-8, £2,600,000; in 1878-9, £2,900,000; in 1879-80, £2,800,000; in 1880-1, £3,250,000; and the same in 1881-2 and 1882-3; while he would call the attention of the House to the fact that in 1883-4 and 1884-5 the amount had sunk to £2,900,000. Therefore, not owing to decreasing correspondence, but to increased expenditure demanded by that House, they were bringing down the profits of the Post Office. If they were going to tamper with that revenue, what were they going to put in its place, representing as it did something like 1½*d.* of Income Tax? He was reminded of a saying of Mr. Cobden, quoted by the right hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright), that it seemed to be the faith of some hon. Members that there was an inexhaustible receptacle for money behind Mr. Speaker's Chair to which the Treasury could always apply. It was, however, important to remember that every item of expenditure meant an additional item of taxation; and it was an idle thing—and worse than idle—for the House of Commons to make an economical profession of faith, and lead an extravagant life. It must show its faith by its works; and he hoped that the great Liberal Party would resist all proposals, from whatever quarter of the House they came, for increasing the National Expenditure, unless they were prepared to provide the mode and the ways and means by which that increased expenditure should be met. He would point out, also, that we were inside the Postal Union, by which we were bound. We had entered into Treaty obligations, and unless all the Members of the Postal Union consented to a reduction it could not be made. The information of the Government led them to the conclusion that the Powers would strongly object to any reduction below 2½*d.*; and that if such a reduction were proposed by the Union, some additional burden would be put upon us. With reference to the Colonies, the fact was, that the Colonies had expressed no dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs; and their Representatives in this country had deprecated the passing of the Resolution, as the Colonial Governments were not prepared to accept the heavy financial burdens which would thus be cast upon them. Therefore, whilst he sympathized with the hon. Member who had moved the Resolution, and would welcome the day when there should be a penny postage all over the world, he would ask the House to apply to this transaction, dealing with the National Exchequer, the same principle of making both ends meet that they would apply to their private or their business affairs, and that they would refuse to assent to it.

Mr. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleshall) said, that the appeal in favour of economy to which the House has just listened came strangely from a Member of the Government who, during the past six years, had thrown away in the most wanton manner some £28,000,000 of public money in needless and cruel wars. That amount would have provided for the reinforcement of the Postal Service, by the amount which the hon. Member (Mr. Henniker Heaton) stated would be necessary, if his Motion were carried, for a period of 70 years. [*Cries of* "Question!"] He would confine his remarks to the subject of Colonial postage, for any change which touched the Postal Union would involve great delay. He desired to see a universal penny postage between all the Dominions of the Queen. What were the figures which the Secretary to the Treasury adduced as a reason for refusing that most important boon to the Colonies and the Parent Country? The present loss on the inter-oceanic postage amounted to £365,000, and, according to an estimate given by the Post Office Authorities, which naturally would not be very optimistic, the loss, if the Motion was carried, would be about as much again. The real question for the House to decide was, whether the advantages to Britain and her Colonies, which would result from a penny postage, were worth £300,000 to £400,000 a-year? That question he answered in the affirmative. The boon of a cheap postage between our different Colonies and the Mother Country was of such value, that he felt sure that, in the opinion of the great majority of the people of this country, that boon was well worth this expenditure. If a universal penny postage between all parts of the Empire involved further expenditure, the loss to the Revenue would be cheerfully borne. He entirely shared the opinion of the hon. Member who seconded the Motion (Mr. Reid) that the Post Office was never intended to be a financial speculation, and the greater portion of the expense of the proposed reduction might well be borne by this country, especially as the Post Office made the enormous profit of £3,000,000 a-year. He doubted whether, if the people and Legislatures of the Colonies were consulted, they would bear out the views stated by the Financial Secretary to have been expressed by their Representatives in London. In any change, the greater part of the expense ought, he thought, to be borne by the Imperial Exchequer. France, with its Budget of £130,000,000, thereby greatly exceeding that marvellous Budget of £100,000,000 with which the Liberals had favoured the country, could nevertheless afford the boon of penny post-cards between her Colonies and the Mother Country. England ought to be equally generous, especially as the Post Office was now a source of large profit, and might well institute this penny postage. He looked upon the Postal Department as a means of benefiting the people, and not as a source of profit. He thought it would be well not to raise the question of the International Postal Union at present, and ventured to suggest to the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Henniker Heaton) that he should withdraw his Motion in favour of the Amendment of the hon. Member for North Manchester (Mr. Hutton).

Mr. O'HEA (Donegal, W.) said, it was quite clear that the argument of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury rested mainly on the assertion that, by the adoption of the Motion of the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Henniker Heaton), a loss of something like £365,000 would be entailed. He (Mr. O'Hea) believed that that would be a very small matter indeed, when compared with the almost profligate expenditure that had been imposed upon the nation at large through what he might fearlessly call the wicked warfare that had been engaged in. He would be sorry indeed if the Motion were withdrawn, or weakened in its force and effect by the Amendment of the hon. Member for North Manchester (Mr. Hutton). The House should not forget that there were several millions of people who spoke the same language in America, and there was scarcely a family in England, Ireland, or Scotland, some members of which were not citizens of the United States of America, and with whom correspondence was kept up; and any Amendment that would bar the creation of a greatly reduced and uniform postage would, he thought, be a sad and serious misfortune. The postage rates as applied to newspapers, as contrasted with that of letters, presented a curious anomaly. For instance, the postage to South Africa for a letter was 6*d*., and for a newspaper 1*d*., and in other cases, whilst 5*d*. was charged for letters, 1½*d*. was imposed for newspapers. The fact should not be overlooked, that a very large number of people to whom letters were sent in distant countries were soldiers in the British Army and sailors in the Navy. The soldiers and sailors were recruited from the very poorest classes of the community, and he believed that an excessive postage on letters tended greatly to reduce the correspondence between these men and their friends in these countries. The same argument applied to the poor people who had relatives in these distant places; and, in conclusion, he hoped that the better judgment of that House would go entirely in favour of the original Motion, and that the subject should not be weakened by the acceptance of the Amendment.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.) said, he must refuse to follow the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett) into the question of the comparative extravagance of Liberal and Tory Governments; he would only remind him that the Tory Party, to which he belonged, were the strongest opponents of the first proposal to establish a penny post. He felt sure that anything that might help to knit together the Colonies and the Mother Country would always commend itself to the British Parliament, and to no one more than himself. At the same time he hoped that he would not be accused of being a heartless economist if he were to remind the House that the question before it was one of pounds, shillings, and pence. Whatever might be done in this matter ought to be done with the consent of our Colonies, because a large amount of the pecuniary loss involved in the changes proposed would fall on the Colonies. The cost of the Postal Service between the Mother Country and the Colonies was divided between them. In the case of Australia, for example, the Mother Country was responsible for the loss incurred in connection with the mails as far as Colombo, and from there the Colonies were responsible. Nothing could be done in the direction of reducing the postage without consulting our self-governing Colonies; and he had not received from them any communications in favour of a change in the present tariff. If the 6*d.* postage were reduced to a 1*d.* postage, the consequent pecuniary loss could only be made good by the carriage of six times as many letters as were transmitted at present. This was a time of great and universal financial depression. The Australian Colonies had hitherto weathered the storm as well as most countries; but their finances could not be said to be in a flourishing condition, and the same thing might be said of almost every portion of the Empire. It was, therefore, no time for making a gigantic financial experiment. He entreated the House not to commit itself to an abstract Resolution, which could not be carried into execution without the consent of those who would share both the benefit and the burden of the proposed change.

LORD JOHN MANNERS (Leicestershire, E.) said, that having had the honour to fill the Office of Postmaster General he desired to say a few words, and to express his regret that after listening to the debate he found it was impossible for him to support either the original Motion or the Amendment. With regard to the Motion, he thought the House would admit that the Secretary to the Treasury had fairly disposed of all that portion of it which related to countries within the Postal Union. His hon. Friend the Member for North Manchester (Mr. Hutton) seemed to take that view when he advised the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Henniker Heaton) to withdraw his Motion, and allow the Amendment to be put as a substantive proposal. But with regard to the Amendment also, he (Lord John Manners) felt bound to sustain the objections which had been taken from the Government Benches. He cordially sympathized with all those aspirations which had been uttered for knitting still more closely together India, the Colonies, and the Mother Country; but he opposed the Amendment because he believed it would have precisely the opposite effect. His view was that they ought to consult the Colonies, and not act without their consent before the desirability of a reduction in the postage was affirmed, for they would be materially affected by the change. He could not approve the suggestion that the Mother Country should bear the whole, or the greater part, of the loss of Revenue that would be entailed if the Motion were agreed to.

An hon. MEMBER objected to the proposal contained in the Resolution. He could not understand why the country should be put to the expense proposed by it, which amounted to between £400,000 and £500,000 a-year. He was the last man in the world to object to legitimate expense; but he did really object to that expenditure upon the Post Office. He was one of those who was disposed to put matters of that kind down.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, the whole difficulty felt by the Treasury arose from the existing system on which the packet system was organized. So long as the country had £360,000 to pay to one Company and £90,000 to another, without taking into account the vast development of private enterprize, and the vast number of steamship owners whose vessels were at present entirely unutilized, unless they took into consideration other means of carrying the mails at a cheaper rate than was now paid, he did not think the Secretary to the Treasury would be able to meet the demand for an International Penny Postage. But an opportunity offered this year of making a great change in this respect; because, in the present year, one of our largest contracts, which incurred a loss of £150,000 a-year, must be renewed; and before it was renewed it should be considered whether the mails might not be distributed and carried for a less sum by private lines than by the present lines. Again, the contract in connection with the American Service only existed until September next. Under that contract the country was paying for three mails a-week; but, practically, there was only one mail a-week, because, though ships really left weekly, they all crowded into New York on the Sunday morning. If a Committee was formed to consider the present state of the Packet Service, and what changes might be made in it, a means might be found of working the Service at a greater economy over the present course to the country, and of giving to the Colonies and the more important foreign countries all the benefits of the present Service without costing the Treasury one sixpence.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) said, he confidently believed he represented the feeling of the people of Australia in saying that if they were under the impression that they would be met half way in the matter of the reduction of the postage they would be happy to co-operate in the project. Some of the speakers had contended that this reformation could not be carried out without consulting the Colonies; but the terms of the Motion showed that all that was wanted was an expression of opinion by the House that the time had arrived for the Government of the country to open negotiations. Therefore, it was ridiculous for people to get up and say that this proposition could not be carried out without consultation. The people of Australia over and over again had pressed this matter of reduced postage on the Colonial Government; and he had known, at elections there, candidates to be pledged to use their influence with the Government to get a cheaper rate of postage. There had been a considerable profit made by the Government on the whole Post Office administration; and the fact that there was a loss in any one section of that administration was no argument against the Motion. A sixpenny postage was a monstrous and infamous thing, and formed a distinct grievance. The fact was that the matter had never been brought before the Colonies. If the Motion were thrown out, it would have the result of making the Australian Governments, in their turn, pass Resolutions calling upon this country to co-operate with them in bringing about a cheap postage. Suppose that the alteration suggested by the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Henniker Heaton) did result in the loss of a few thousands of pounds a-year, he (Mr. W. Redmond) did not think the Australians would be flattered at the idea that Great Britain did not think her Colonies worth the expenditure of a few thousands a-year extra. He was perfectly certain that if they got the impression out there that this country was so stingy, the Colonists would send no more Contingents to assist her in her difficulties.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby) said, he rose to say a word, not upon the discussion, but upon the course which might be taken on the division, as there had been some misunderstanding lately on a similar occasion. There were two courses which might be followed by those who were opposed both to the Motion and the Amendment. They might either negative the original words when the Question was put, and afterwards negative the Amendment or—what he ventured to think was a more convenient course—when the Question was put from the Chair, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," they might sustain the original words, and afterwards, when the original words became the substantive Question, vote against them.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 127; Noes 258: Majority 131.—(Div. List, No. 52.)

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (DISESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT).

RESOLUTION.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College), in rising to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the Church of Scotland ought to be Disestablished and Disendowed,"

said: The Church Question in Scotland is the burning question at the present moment. Public feeling in regard to it is so divided that it is undesirable in the extreme that its settlement should be unnecessarily postponed. There are two antagonistic proposals for its settlement before the country. One is zealously supported by the Church Party, and consists in what is called the reconstruction of the Church—that is to say, such modification in its relations to the State as is hoped may enable it, by the advantage in the shape of endowment, gradually to disintegrate and absorb the Nonconforming Presbyterian communities. The second proposal for the settlement of the question is in the shape of Disestablishment and Disendowment, which, by placing all the Churches of the country upon the same footing, would enable them all to work out their future and their destinies for themselves, without being interfered with by means of State favouritism or State control. Now, Sir, this House recently pronounced on the first, on the reconstruction scheme. I ask it now to consider the other alternative. But there is, however, this practical difference in the manner in which the two schemes are brought before the notice of the House—that the reconstruction scheme of the hon. and learned Member for the Inverness Burghs (Mr. Finlay) was embodied in a Bill. If that Bill had passed, the scheme would have come into operation without delay. I bring forward the other alternative in the shape of an abstract Resolution, affirming simply the principle of a practical application of religious equality; and the Resolution may be supported without committing its supporters to any expression of opinion as to the time or opportunity when it should be carried into effect. Now, Sir, the Established Church in Scotland has long ceased to fulfil the considerations in connection with which, in a bygone age, it was established and endowed. So far from being the Church of the majority of the population, three-fifths of the entire population in Scotland are to be found outside its walls. It is not the Church even of the entire Presbyterian community of Scotland; on the contrary, a moiety of the Presbyterians of Scotland are to be found in other Churches, and they regard the continuance of the privileges enjoyed by the Establishment as inexpedient, unjust, and an obstacle to the development and harmony and usefulness of their common religion. I am a firm believer in the doctrine laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, in his address to the electors of Mid Lothian, as a fundamental principle of Liberal policy—that nothing should be done by the State which could be as well or better effected by voluntary effort. I maintain that the experience, and notably that of the past 40 years, has shown that the development and maintenance of the Presbyterian Church can be better effected by means of voluntary effort than by anything which could be done by the State in connection with it; and as the logical corollary to the principle laid down by the Prime Minister I ask the House to support the Resolution which I submit. The Presbyterian Church in Scotland is divided into three great bodies—the Established, the Free, and the United Presbyterian Churches. Between them these Churches maintained over 3,000 places of worship; and of these almost exactly one-half belong to the Established Church and the other half to the Nonconforming Presbyterian Churches. Of the belonging to the Nonconforming Churches, over 1,000 have sprung into existence in the 40 years which have elapsed since the Disruption. The joint income of the three Presbyterian Churches from all sources amounts, in round numbers, to £1,750,000 sterling per annum. Of that sum, over £1,000,000 sterling represents the joint income of the Free and the United Presbyterian

Churches, and under £750,000 the revenues of the Established Church. Now, one-half the revenues of the Established Church are derived from voluntary sources; and it will be thus seen that the endowments received from the State constitute a mere fraction of it in their amount. As I have shown, the income of the Nonconforming Presbyterian Churches of Scotland is 33 per cent greater than that enjoyed by the Establishment from all sources, including endowment; and this is the more remarkable, because the Established Church claims to possess a considerably larger membership than the other Bodies combined. If I were to bring forward figures regarding the relative strength of the three Churches those figures would at once be challenged, and we should be plunged into a maze of statistics whence there would be no exit. Hence it is that I prefer to refer to financial results. As I have said, the revenues of the Nonconforming Presbyterian Churches are very much larger than those possessed by the Establishment, and that is the more remarkable, because the Established Church claims to possess a very considerably larger strength. The other Bodies deny that it is so large as it claims to be, and they assert that their numbers are as great, or greater, than those in the Establishment. But it is admitted that, at least, they are not far inferior in point of numbers. If they are inferior, so much the stronger a case, it appears to me, is made out for asserting the efficiency of voluntary effort for the support of Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, and for asserting that the effect of the endowments which it receives is simply to depress the private liberality of individuals connected with it. Here you have, practically, two Churches—one endowed and established, the other self-supporting—in the same country and maintained by the same people. The Establishment is the richer Church and the Church which claims to be more numerous. Well, under ordinary circumstances that Church should show a greater amount of liberality, and its revenues from voluntary sources should be greater; but besides the sums which its members voluntarily give, it receives from the State somewhere not far short of £400,000 a-year. The effect of that should be enormously to increase the advantage that it enjoys in point of revenue; but, so far from that being the case, so chilling and depressing is found to be the effect of this State endowment, that even with all that the total revenues of the Established Church fall far short of the amount received by the Free and United Presbyterian Churches, whose membership is poorer, and whose numbers are asserted to be very considerably less. I have quoted the figures for the year 1884-5. I observe a statement issued on behalf of the Church of Scotland, which contains statistics regarding its income for the last 13 years. I have not been able to institute any comparison with similar statistics with other Churches of this period. But some time ago the first portion of the figures were made public—those ending for the nine years in 1880—and these have been compared with similar figures of the same time with regard to Nonconformist Churches. The result showed that during the nine years ending 1880, a period in which the Established Church received a great windfall in the shape of the Baird Bequest of £500,000, its revenues from all sources amounted to only £7,000,000 sterling. During the same period the revenue raised by the Free and United Presbyterian Churches amounted to £8,250,000, showing an excess of £1,250,000 over the Established Church. Could there be any more startling proof of the fact that Presbyterianism in Scotland could be as well, or better, maintained by voluntary effort than anything that State support can do in connection with it? How do the Bodies that constitute that large and active section of Presbyterianism which is self-supporting—how do they regard the present system of Establishment and endowment as bearing on the interests of their common religion? They regard the attitude of the Establishment as one of danger and menace towards them. They have seen it of late years, not content with the advantage it enjoys, seeking to modify its relations with the State in such a manner as to extend its field of operation at their expense. They have naturally resented that, and taken up, in self-defence, the position which they occupy of demanding the Disestablishment of the Church. What says the Free Church, as the larger of the two Nonconforming Bodies, on this point? I have no doubt we shall hear something of the theoretical opinions of the Free Church on this subject; but it appears to me this is a matter in which, as practical politicians, we have nothing to do. What we have to do with is, what is the practical attitude of the Free Church towards Disestablishment as a political question? The views of that Church are set forth most tersely and distinctly in a single sentence which I shall quote from a deliverance of the Free Church Assembly in 1884—a Resolution carried by a majority of six to one—and I quote the sentence in question simply because it sets forth most concisely the gist of a number of Resolutions on the same question, passed by the same Body over a long series of years. The sentence I refer to is this—

> "That, in the opinion of the General Assembly of the Free Church, with a view to justice, peace, and the healthy action of the Churches, Disestablishment and Disendowment are essential; that the settletment of this question has been too long delayed; and that the time has come to press it energetically on the Legislature."

That, as I have said, was carried by a majority of six to one. It is said the laity do not share in the view thus set forth; but I cannot see how, in a self-supporting Church like the Free Church, the clergy could long maintain themselves at variance with the general opinions of their congregations without being made fully aware of it. Besides, it is a feature of the Presbyterian Church government that the laity is fully represented in the Church Courts, and the sentiment I have just quoted was endorsed by the laymen members and the elders of the Free Church by a majority of 149 against 28. That sentence is the official declaration of the Free Church on the subject, and it is perfectly consistent with similar declarations made by the Free Church over a period of more than 10 years. As to the attitude of the United Presbyterian Church, it is essentially, in practice and principle, a voluntary Church. The United Presbyterians regard an Established Church as un-Scriptural, and consider it unjust. These views on the subject of the State Establishment in Scotland are not confined to these two Dissenting Churches, but are largely shared by the other Churches outside the Establishment. There is only one exception among the Churches who regard the question in a different light, and that is the Episcopalians in Scotland, who are a very small body. Nor is the question one which interests simply Churchmen and Church Courts; it largely moves the general public in Scotland, and a very decided opinion has been arrived at, especially among the Liberal political Bodies in the country, regarding it. In September last there was held in Glasgow a conference of delegates from a large number of Liberal Associations throughout Scotland, and at that conference a Resolution in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment was adopted by an overwhelming majority. Later on, in October, when the question was still more prominently before the Scottish public, and had been debated all over the country in a most exhaustive fashion—in this month of October another meeting of delegates from the Liberal Associations was held, this time in Perth, under the auspices of the Scottish Liberal Association, and at that conference this Resolution was passed—

> "That the time has now come for making Disestablishment a plank in the Liberal platform, and that the question should be dealt with in a fair and generous spirit at the earliest opportunity."

At a public meeting, held in the evening of the same day, the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) was one of the principal speakers, and he said—

> "It was not so much a question of time as a question of this great object being recognized as one of those for which the Liberal Party, as a body, were to strive; and he ventured to say that the events of that day marked a decided step in advance towards the settlement of this great question."

There were other Members present who are now Members of the Government, and they were committed to Resolutions that pronounced quite as strongly in favour of religious equality as those adopted earlier in the day. As to the sentimental arguments for and against, they may be set up one against the other. The only practical one I have come across consists in the alleged insufficiency of the voluntary principle to maintain the Presbyterian religion of the Scottish people. We are told that there exists in Scotland 360 parishes in which there are no Free or United Presbyterian places of worship; but we are not told in how many of these parishes there are places of worship belonging to these Bodies conveniently adjacent or immediately across the Border. I believe that is the case in many instances, and that in many of these parishes the wants of the members of Dissenting communities are amply provided for. But in any case we do not propose to abolish any existing Church, but simply to withdraw from one Church the exceptional support and advantages which that Church at present enjoys—to place her precisely on the same footing as the other Churches of the land; and there is not the smallest reason to believe the result of such an operation would be more disastrous in her case than it has proved in the Nonconformist Churches. She would find herself launched on a new career under circumstances vastly more advantageous than they were launched on theirs. She would find herself with an organization already to her hand, with the life interests of her clergy carefully guarded, and would experience gradually the effect of the Disendowment to which she would be subjected. Under those circumstances, to my mind, it is inconceivable that the Establishment would abandon any field where she found she could labour profitably; and if she were to do so, I am perfectly certain that other Churches in Scotland would not be long in stepping forward and occupying the ground left vacant. We are not left to argument to show the insufficiency of the endowment system to provide for the wants of the poorest community in Scotland, neither are we dependent on argument to show the sufficiency of the voluntary system to do so. In the very poorest districts—namely, in the Highlands and Islands, there it is precisely that the Established Church is in such a condition that its continuance is most indefensible, and there a Nonconforming Church is found the strongest. In four of the Northern counties of Scotland the number of members of the Established Church is only one in about 60 of the population, and the cost in the shape of endowments of maintaining Established Churches for this small minority is over £6 10*s.* for each communicant on her roll. I can name five Highland parishes in which the population is over 12,000, and in which the number of the communicants of the Established Church is returned as only 22, or one in about 560 of the population, and the cost of maintaining churches for that small minority out of public endowments does not fall far short of £50 per member. In the Highlands and Islands the Free Church members form the vast majority of the population; and though in many cases these Highland congregations are not self-supporting, yet their wants are liberally supplied from the funds of the Church to which they belong, and there is not the smallest ground for State interference on the excuse that there is any lack of money. In fact, it is precisely in those districts that the endowments of the Established Church have been for years most completely thrown away and wasted. The Established Church itself is, to a large degree, supported from voluntary contributions. Half its funds come from that source. Those recent extensions which it has made, and of which it is so justly proud, have all been made through the voluntary munificence of its members; and it is precisely in those of its congregations which are not in the smallest degree dependent on endowments that the churches are found in a healthy and flourishing condition. The only effect of the subsidy from the public funds which the Established Church enjoys is to repress the private liberality of its members, to promote strife between it and its brethren, to render impossible that union between the Presbyterian communities of Scotland which, if the Church were disestablished and disendowed to-morrow, would, I am convinced, be certainly brought about in the course of a few years. When the Church of Scotland was established, it was practically set up as a Department of the State; and it rendered service to the State, or what was at that time considered to be service, in consideration of which it may have been natural and proper that the State should see to its maintenance and support. In the last century its Courts performed the functions of a sort of moral police of the country. They laid down rules for the conduct and guidance of the populations in which they were planted. With the concurrence of the Civil Authority they punished breaches of their discipline by means of fines, humiliations, and, in extreme cases, by banishment from the parish. They acted generally as Local Authorities, maintained the poor, and performed duties now performed by the Parochial Board. Their Courts had the sole right of determining what should constitute regular and religious marriages, and their clergymen had the sole right of performing religious marriages. On them devolved the duty of looking after the national education of the country, and superintending and controlling the orthodoxy of the Professors in the Scotch Universities and the schoolmasters of the parish schools. All these duties have long ago been taken from the Church of Scotland; and I maintain there is no reason why the emoluments granted in connection with these services should be retained by her. Such figments of her ancient duties and privileges as she now retains are not in any single instance necessary, either to the public interest or to her efficiency as a Church. She retains a restricted jurisdiction in the matter of marriage, which will be swept away on the first reform of our Marriage Laws that takes place. She retains the right of the representation of her kirk session on the Parochial Boards of the country; but that right will be abolished the moment any rational system of local self-government is erected in the counties of Scotland. Her ministers claim the very questionable right of exemption from the payment of rates for the support of the poor. ["No, no!"] Well, they have—they do. It is said her churches possess the sole legal right to use bells for summoning the congregations to worship, and she enjoys the distinction of having her General Assembly attended by a Royal High Commissioner, who is the Representative of the Sovereign. ["Hear, hear!"] Well, I do not know whether the Lord High Commissioner is to be regarded as a privilege; for, as a matter of fact, he was in the first instance thrust upon the Church, and was received very reluctantly. None of these distinctions or privileges are, in the smallest degree, conducive to the public interest or to the efficiency of the Church. Now, coming to the question of Disendowment, I understand by Disendowment in this Resolution a resumption by the State for public purposes of public funds which are at present monopolized by a Church which comprises a mere section of the community. I have no doubt that in the course of this debate reference will be made to the Bill that was introduced last Session by Mr. Dick-Peddie, and I may say at once that my Resolution has nothing whatever to do with that Bill. There are many of the details of that Bill of which I never approved.

SIR ARCHIBALD ORR-EWING (Dumbarton): Your name was on the back of it.

DR. CAMERON: That is quite true; but my name was on the back of it only as approving of the general principle of the Bill, which was Disestablishment and Disendowment. In any case, that was a Bill of last Session, and this Resolution is one which speaks for itself, and must be considered on its own merits. If this Resolution were adopted by the House, and effect were given to it by the Executive Government, the Government would deal with the question in its own way; and I think there can be no question whatever that they would deal with it in a manner very different to that proposed in Mr. Dick-Peddie's Bill. Now, so far as I am concerned, I have not the smallest desire to take from the Church of Scotland any of the property which she possesses, which has been contributed to her by the private munificence of her members. I have not the smallest desire, in resuming the public monies which she at present enjoys, to resume them without the most strict and generous regard for the life-interest of those ministers who are paid out of these public monies. The public endowments of the Church of Scotland amount to somewhat over £350,000 a-year; and as regarding the public nature of some of the items of those endowments there cannot be a shadow of question. For instance, there is some £23,000 a-year received out of the public funds of various towns in Scotland. There is another sum, of about the same amount, paid by the Exchequer, part of which goes to augment the livings of some of the smaller clergy, and part towards the payment of the expenses of the General Assembly and the salary of the Lord High Commissioner. There cannot be the smallest question that these sums are public money; but the most important item of the property enjoyed by this Church at the present moment consists in the stipends of her ministers, which are paid out of teinds or tithes. The stipends so paid amount, at the present time, to about £240,000 a-year, and they are increasing at the rate of £800 per annum. Now it may be said that these teinds or tithes constitute a charge on the land, and are virtually the private property of the Church. I admit that they are a charge on the land; but I maintain that they are a public charge, which Parliament is perfectly entitled to deal with as it thinks proper, and in which the Church's interest rests on a Parliamentary sanction, and can be brought to an end whenever Parliament thinks fit to bring it to an end. I have seen, again and again repeated, a statement to the effect that these tithes originated in the founders of the old Caledonian Church, and that the Presbyterian Establishment was the natural heir of that Church. As a matter of fact, however, according to the best and most unbiassed authorities, such as Burton the historian and Mr. Cosmo Innes, it appears certain that teinds were unknown in the ancient Caledonian Church, and that they were first introduced in Scotland during the 12th century, for the support of the Roman Catholic religion. It is also equally certain that those tithes, along with other property, were appropriated partly by the State and partly by the Nobles of Scotland. For some years after the Reformation the Established Church received nothing. In John Knox's time the subsidy was almost *nil*, amounting only to some £2,000 per annum. Indeed, it was not for many years after that anything like a substantial sum was paid for the maintenance of the Established Church, and at the time it was paid I believe the Church was Episcopalian. The amount of these teinds, as I have said, is annually increasing, and they give rise to much litigation and friction; and it is very desirable that this portion of the ecclesiastical system should be overhauled. In some cases the persons who are compelled to pay suffer very substantial injury. The church and manse rate, for building operations for the maintenance and repair of churches and manses, is another source of income, which averages over Scotland about £42,000 a-year. It is levied on feuars and heritors at irregular intervals, and on all creeds alike; and it is never levied without giving rise to the greatest heart-burnings and dissatisfaction. As to the right of Parliament to deal with this source of revenue there cannot be the smallest question. As the functions of the Church of Scotland as a Department of the State have diminished, her endowments have increased, and the circumstances under which they were granted to her are entirely altered; and I maintain that the time has come when they should be withdrawn and applied to some public national use, such as education, in the benefits of which all classes of the community would participate. The Treaty of Union provided for the maintenance of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland; but the provisions of that Treaty had hardly become dry when they were broken by the imposition of lay patronage; again, when tests were abolished in the case of Professors; and, again, when the care of national education was taken out of the hands of the Church. The General Assembly recognized this, and said that it was as much within the competency of the Legislature to abolish the Presbyterian and establish the Episcopal polity in Scotland, as to abrogate the connection between the parish schools and the Church in Scotland. It is, therefore, too late in the day to bring up the Treaty of Union as a reason why we should not have further reform. My hon. Friend the Member for West Perthshire (Sir Donald Currie) has an Amendment, in which he objects to my Motion, as it strikes me, on rather curious grounds. When my hon. Friend was before his constituents, he informed them that he would move an Amendment to my Motion affirming the principle of religious equality, which unfortunately he has neglected to do on this occasion, and that he would pray for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the wishes of the people of Scotland in regard to the Established Church, and the future application of teinds in the event of its being disestablished. Well, my hon. Friend recently asked the Prime Minister whether he would agree to such a Commission; and the reply was that he would do no such thing. In the course of his reply to my hon. Friend the Prime Minister indulged in a phrase of somewhat Delphic significance; but that phrase is very far from setting before the House in any complete fashion the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman on the question. The Prime Minister has said, again and again, that the matter is one for the decision of the people of Scotland; and the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) said that this was a matter in regard to which the Liberal Party would be prepared to act whenever the Liberal Party in Scotland had made up its mind. Because the Prime Minister refuses a Royal Commission my hon. Friend urges the House not to sanction my Motion, and objects to my taking means to ascertain, in a very obvious fashion, the opinion of the towns of Scotland on the subject. I cannot see how you can possibly get at the opinion of Scotland, unless we either bring the matter before Parliament, or unless we have a Commission, or unless we have a *plébiscite.* I do not know whether the Party opposite will support the Amendment of my hon. Friend; but if they do it appears to me they will find themselves committed to the attitude of the Prime Minister on the subject—that is to say, to an attitude which some months ago Lord Salisbury denounced as most pernicious and dangerous. If they decide for the Amendment, and carry it, they will have made such a distinct advance in the direction of Disestablishment as will repay me for any defeat I may sustain from the coalition of their forces with those of my hon. Friend. It is said that the Prime Minister pledged himself to no legislation adverse to the Establishment during the present Parliament. That is perfectly true, and my Motion now before the House does not amount to any proposal for legislation on the subject. I propose nothing of the sort. I merely ask the House to affirm an abstract principle, and I do so for the purpose of enabling the country to commence expressing its opinions on the subject. No amount of Petitions, signed by persons above and under 15 years of age, and got up in such a way as to call for remark from the Select Committee on Public Petitions, could afford any reliable indication, and neither could the feeling of the people be ascertained by means of a Royal Commission. To carry out a *plébiscite* would require an Act of Parliament; and that Act, as being the first step towards Disestablishment, would be as vigorously opposed as a Bill for carrying out Disestablishment itself. There is only one way in which public opinion could be effectually constitutionally known, and that is at the polling booths. Of course, after the position taken up by the Prime Minister with regard to Disestablishment, I understand that no practical result can come from this Resolution of mine, even if it is carried by a large majority. That, of course, is perfectly understood; but I bring it forward because I think it is only by preliminary Parliamentary action that constituencies can be enabled to ascertain how far their views move in accord with those of their Representatives in this House. Whatever the result of this debate may be, I have every confidence that sooner or later the Liberal electorate of Scotland will, through their Representatives here, make their opinions effectually felt in favour of that solution of the Church Question proposed in my Resolution, and in support of the practical application of those principles of civil and religious liberty which so long have constituted one of the most essential articles in the Liberal creed.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.), in rising to second the Motion, said, he must make one admission to the opponents of the Motion. He must admit that, to a certain extent, the discussion partook of an academic character; for it was well understood at the General Election that, although the question would be brought up in the House of Commons for consideration and discussion, yet, whatever the result of that discussion might be, no practical step would be taken in the present Parliament for the Disestablishment or Disendowment of the Church of Scotland. But that reserve did not interfere with a free exchange of opinion between candidates and constituencies upon the subject of Disestablishment; and in the county and town of Aberdeen public opinion was expressed in the most decisive manner by returning to Parliament the Disestablishment candidates by overwhelming and greatly-increased majorities. It seemed not impossible to hope that they might have a more thorough and exhaustive discussion on this subject, inasmuch as hon. Members, relieved from the fear of any immediate consequences, might be disposed to take a calmer and more dispassionate view of the question.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present: House counted, and 40 Members being present,

MR. HUNTER (resuming) went on to say that the question of Disestablishment in Scotland was fortunate in one respect—it was not embittered by animosity. The Established Church in Ireland presented a striking contrast to the religious feeling of the Irish people; but in Scotland the Established Church was in doctrinal unity with the leading non-Established Churches. It was not an alien Church representing a hostile creed. It was the old Church, which at one time embraced within its fold the entire united Presbyterian community in Scotland. It was a Church that was regarded, even by those who did not belong to it, without the smallest particle of anything like animosity. Its clergy were a hard-working and learned body of men, whose emoluments did not err on the side of excess, and it was not encumbered with overpaid and underworked dignitaries. All its clergy met on a footing of democratic equality, and its laity, equally with its clergy, shared in the government of the Church. Its history every Scotchman could read with pride. It shared in the struggles of the Scottish people for their civil rights and national independence, and its fall was the signal of national humiliation and degrading servitude; its rise was the sure sign of the restoration of the national liberties. But he could not admit that the happy memories that clustered round the "Auld Kirk" were the sole and exclusive property of its present members. The other great Presbyterian Bodies equally inherited those traditions; and it was not impossible, if a measure of Disestablishment were passed, that the influence of those traditions and the circumstances of the different Churches might lead once more to a re-united Church of Scotland. But though their feelings towards the Church were not those of animosity, they felt bound to condemn it as a political institution. They objected to the establishment of the Churches of England and Scotland, on the ground that the idea for which they were established had long since ceased to be approved by any Party. Those who founded Established Churches entertained a theory of the connection between Church and State that was now universally discredited and abandoned by all Parties. That theory was that the primary and most important function of a Government was to discover the true religion, and that, having discovered that religion, their primary duty was to teach it to their people, and not only to teach it, but to punish with imprisonment, and even with death, any persons who presumed to uphold or preach any different doctrine. It was only necessary to refer to that fact to show how completely out of place an Established Church was in a free modern community. Fortunately, they were able to deal with this question in a friendly spirit and on broad grounds of political justice. In the present state of society there were only two courses open to any Government in dealing with Churches which were at all consistent with justice between man and man. One course was to level up by endowing and supporting all Churches, and the other was to endow and support none. They ought either to level up or to level down. The difficulty in Scotland in the way of levelling up was that there was no money to do it with. The teinds were a fund limited and already appropriated, and any further endowments must come from the Imperial Exchequer. There was, however, no chance of that, and the present endowments of the Established Church were not sufficient for the wants of that denomination; much less did they admit of being spread over the various Religious Bodies in Scotland. But even if the money could be found to level up, there was this insurmountable obstacle—that some of the largest Religious Bodies would refuse such subventions; for experience had convinced them of that which, in the absence of experience, might have been open to doubt—that a Church was never in so healthy a condition as when it relied for its support upon the Christian liberality of its people. He asked those belonging to the Established Church to consider the question as practical men, and say whether they could believe in a privileged Church as a permanent institution in a free country? Let them examine what Disestablishment practically meant, and say whether, as Churchmen desiring the welfare of the Church, that process had any real terrors for them, or what harm would be done to them by a reasonable scheme of Disestablishment and Disendowment? Suppose that Parliament should, in a fit of economy, refuse to pay £2,000 a-year to a Lord High Commissioner to give tea parties and dinner parties during the sitting of the Assembly, would that be a serious injury to the true work of the Church? Whatever he might say in that House and elsewhere on that subject might, he hoped, tend in the direction of a settlement; because, in his opinion, this was a question which ought to be settled by reasonable concessions on both sides. What were the present privileges of the Established Church? There were only two privileges which were of serious importance which had not been alluded to by his hon. Friend (Dr. Cameron). One was the power of the Established Church, at the present moment, with regard to parish churches and manses needing repairs. That power was one whereby the minister, instead of going to his own congregation for money to defray the expense, falls upon the feuars and heritors in the parish; and these men—Free Churchmen, or Congregationalists, or Baptists, or Roman Catholics—had to find the money for a church they never entered. Church rates had already been abolished in England; and there was not much chance of their being long maintained in Scotland, for no one could believe that a practice so inconsistent with common fairness could be maintained for ever. The answer to the question might be found in a Bill introduced into that House that Session by the hon. Members for the Inverness Burghs and Linlithgowshire to put an end to ecclesiastical assessments in Scotland. It was similar to the Church Rates (English) Bill. When staunch friends of the Establishment like those hon. Members adopted such a course, it required no gift of prophecy to fortell that before long Church rates in Scotland would be abolished, and therein one of the chief privileges of the Established Church. There was another privilege, which was undoubtedly of considerable consequence to the Established Church, and that was the possession of the Theological Chairs in the Scotch Universities. Those Chairs presented a remarkable contrast to other Chairs. In the Faculties of Arts, Laws, and Medicine men of any religious denominations, or of none, could be appointed Professors, and students of all denominations listened to their lectures; but while the Universities were useful Institutions largely supported by taxes paid by the whole community, the Theological Chairs were only open to clergymen of the Established Church, and consequently nobody attended those lectures except students of the Established Church.

Sir ARCHIBALD ORR-EWING: I beg your pardon; that is not so.

Mr. HUNTER said, he did not know whether his hon. Friend, in his early days, was endowed with any extreme desire to attend those classes; but the attendance of members of other denominations was extremely rare. In point of fact, these University endowments had been diverted to what was nothing more or less than a private theological seminary for the education of ministers of one denomination in Scotland; and he would ask—How could anyone justify such application of University funds? During the present Session the Scotch Universities would probably come to Parliament asking the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide money to establish new Chairs. With what conscience could hon. Members from Scotland do so while the existing funds were diverted from a national to a purely denominational use? Before granting fresh money it was probable that the House would say that it was desirable to utilize the money now wasted upon the training of ministers of one denomination for the benefit of the whole of Scotland. How did the friends of the Established Church think that the peculiar abuse of the Theological Chairs in the Universities could be long maintained? Let the House now inquire what Disendowment involved. The property that had to be considered for the purpose of Disendowment consisted substantially of the fabrics—the churches and manses—and the stipends paid out of teinds or public funds. In so far as any of the churches and manses had been built out of funds bearing a private character, such as the Baird Trust, they would be exempt from Disendowment. But in so far as churches and manses had been built out of moneys raised by way of taxation from land, they might well be considered to partake of the same public character as the taxes themselves. At the present time public opinion was in a very favourable condition for dealing with that question. It might not be so if a long and bitter controversy took place upon the subject; but certainly at the present moment the disposition of all parties was to make a very generous arrangement for the Established Church, much more generous than that which the Established Church made with those who went out of it in 1843. Perhaps he might be allowed to give the House an instance of what happened in that year. The church to which his father belonged was built by public subscription. At the time of the Disruption all the members of the congregation seceded, and there was not a remnant left to form the nucleus of a new congregation. It was impossible to utilize the building for the purpose of religious worship, and it might have been thought that the Established Church would stretch a point to come to terms with the congregation by allowing them the use of the building. No terms were made, the Church authorities preferred to lock it up, leaving it idle, rather than to sell it at a cheap rate, or let it to the congregation that had worshipped in it for so many years, and the result was that they were turned out, and for 20 years the building remained in a dilapidated and windowless condition, a miserable memento of the pitiless logic of the Establishment. At the end of that time the persons who had legal authority over the building took possession of it, and compassionately converted it into a music-hall, which function it continued to fulfil. [Sir ARCHIBALD ORR-EWING: It had not been a parish church.] No; it was a chapel-of-ease church. That was an instance of what happened universally with regard to both churches and manses in Scotland in 1843. The churches and manses constituted by far the largest part of the wealth of the Established Church; but he found no desire among the friends of Disestablishment to repay the Established Church with the application of its own logic. On the contrary, all were willing that the Church should retain its churches and its manses. What was the annual value of the churches and manses he had no information that would enable him to state with precision; but the Parliamentary Returns showed how much was the annual cost of renewals and repairs. Taking the 10 years ending the 31st of December, 1879, the total paid by heritors for the building and repairing of churches and manses was £420,827, or, as had been previously mentioned, an annual average of £42,000 a-year, levied from Church rates. But since that time this sum showed an alarming tendency to a rapid increase. The average for the two years 1882 and 1883 was not £42,000, but £51,249. The Returns did not enable them to distinguish between building and repairs; but, with the exception of two items, amounting to £3,000, the smallness of the sums in other cases led to the inference that it was repairs rather than building. If the annual repairs were taken at the low figure of £40,000 a-year, the annual value could hardly be less than ten times as much, which would give an annual value of £400,000. Next to fabrics, the only property to be considered was the stipends paid out of teinds. That might be taken as under £250,000 a-year. He would not enter into any legal or historical argument to show that the money derived from teinds was property over which the State had a free disposing power. Hitherto the State had sanctioned the appropriation of these funds to the maintenance of a part of the clergy of the Established Church. That the State, having due regard to life interests, might properly alter the destination of those funds was a point that was fully considered in the case of the Episcopal Church in Ireland, which the Parliament of 1868 disestablished and disendowed. What he would like to point out to the members of the Established Church was the extreme smallness of the damage which they would sustain by a scheme of gradual Disendowment. No one contemplated that during the lifetime of any minister the stipend payable to him would be taken from him; and consequently the stipends would continue for the lives of the existing ministers, the Church losing this endowment, not at once, but by degrees as the present ministers died out. How much in the shape of voluntary contribution would it take to supply the absence of the teinds? The sum was ridiculously small. He would assume that one-third of the people of Scotland belonged to the Established Church. If, as some contended, the proportion was larger, so much the lighter would the burden be. During the first year after Disestablishment, suppose that ministers died whose stipends amounted to £10,000. To pay that amount would require a contribution of 2*d.* per head during the whole year. When the whole of the stipends had fallen in that 2*d.* would become 4*d.* in the second year, 6*d.* in the third year, and so on, until it ultimately amounted, assuming there was no increase in its numbers, to 4*s.* per head per annum, or a weekly contribution of barely 1*d.* per head. If anyone were to tell him that to withdraw this limited sum from the Establishment in that manner would be destructive to the efficiency of the Church, he should regard the statement as one that seemed to him to partake of the nature of a libel on the members of that Church. To say even that it would involve an appreciable strain on the resources of the members was equally ridiculous. In conclusion, he would venture to say that the parties were so very near to each other, there was so little practically to divide them, that he did not despair that before the end of the controversy members of the Establishment would see it to be their interest to make terms with the other Churches, for there was nothing in this question which did not admit of a reasonable approximation to an agreement by all parties. He begged to second the Resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the Church of Scotland ought to be Disestablished and Disendowed."—(*Dr. Cameron.*)

SIR DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): I rise to move the following Amendment to the Motion of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron)—namely:—

> "That, having regard to the declaration recently made by the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the appointment of a Royal Commission on the subject of Disestablishment in Scotland, to the effect that, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, 'this important question of the continuance and circumstances of the Established Church in Scotland should be left as much as possible to the spontaneous action and consideration of the Country,' this House declines to entertain a proposal for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Scottish Church until the wishes of the people of Scotland in relation thereto shall have been ascertained."

I do not propose to discuss the general question of Church Establishments, or to enter into the arguments for or against the maintenance of an Established Church in Scotland. This House has repeatedly, in recent years, adopted Resolutions and legislative proposals giving effect to the principle of religious equality; and if we had now to discuss the propriety of establishing a Church north of the Tweed, I would not be prepared, any more than my hon. Friend, to vote for such a measure. But what the hon. Member wishes to do is to disestablish and disendow the Church of Scotland without loss of time; while, on the other hand, I would suggest that, even accepting the principle of religious equality, there are many weighty reasons why the hasty action he proposes should not be carried out. The Motion of my hon. Friend has had a varied and peculiar history. Towards the close of last Parliament he gave Notice that he would move in this Parliament—

> "That the Church of Scotland should forthwith be Disestablished and Disendowed."

But my hon. Friend seems, since that time, to have had some doubt whether the Motion might not be considered as too precipitate, and he has accordingly deleted the word "forthwith." My hon. Friend publicly intimated very plainly that he would, in one way or another, secure the attention of the House to this subject, and that the opportunity would be found in the new Democratic House of Commons, where very few Scottish Members would have the courage to oppose him. But the question was put in the proper light, during the General Election, by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), in the speech made by him in Edinburgh on the 11th of November. The Prime Minister, on that occasion, said that he wished the settlement of the Church Question left to the people of Scotland, because no settlement could be satisfactory which was not the offspring of genuine Scottish sentiment and Scottish conviction; and he urged that Disestablishment should not be made a test question in the Election which was about to take place. Answering in anticipation a question that was to be put to him, as to whether he would support the Motion of the hon. Member for Glasgow, the right hon. Gentleman said he declined to raise false expectations by committing himself to that Resolution; and he gave it as his opinion that no such Resolution could be accepted as indicating the opinion of Scotland. My own position on the Church Question had been declared to the electors of West Perthshire a month before the right hon. Gentleman spoke in Edinburgh, and was completely in harmony with the views which he afterwards expressed. In my electoral address I repeated the words which I had used in 1880—namely, that the Church Question should

> "Be considered with caution, and settled by the voice of the people of Scotland, with a view to the promotion of their religious welfare."

With all respect to the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow, I venture to submit that his course of action on this subject has not been altogether consistent; for in the debate upon the second reading of the Bill introduced by the hon. Member for the Inverness Burghs (Mr. Finlay) he referred to the Prime Minister's declaration in Edinburgh as an argument against that measure. These were the words used by my hon. Friend—

> "The position taken up by the Prime Minister was reluctantly acquiesced in by those who desired the settlement of this question on the lines of Disestablishment."

My hon. Friend, consequently, argued that the hon. Member for the Inverness Burghs was not entitled, in view of the attitude taken up by the Prime Minister, to bring forward a measure of a remedial character, intended to benefit the Church of Scotland to the disadvantage of its opponents. If the hon. Member's argument is worth anything, it must apply both ways; and if the Prime Minister's declaration is accepted as effective against the Bill of the hon. Member for the Inverness Burghs, it must be equally effective against the present Motion of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow. I have referred to the change which the hon. Member has made in his Motion by the omission of the word "forthwith;" but another evidence, that even his own mind is not so very clear upon this question may be found in the course which he followed with reference to the Bill of the hon. Member for the Inverness Burghs. First of all, he gave Notice that when that Bill came on for second reading he would move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is inexpedient to pass any measure having for its object the perpetuation of an ecclesiastical establishment in Scotland;"

but when the Bill came before the House he altered his Motion, and proposed—

> "That the Bill be read a second time this day six months."

Is it not somewhat inconsistent on the part of my hon. Friend, before a fortnight of those six months has expired, to ask the House to lose no time in disestablishing and disendowing the Church of Scotland? When this Disestablishment Motion was first given Notice of, the Amendment which I put on the Paper was in the following terms:—

> "That this House, having regard to the history of Scotland, the present position of its ecclesiastical affairs, and the guarantee of Presbytery under the Treaty of Union, humbly prays Her Majesty to issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the wishes of the Scottish nation in regard to Disestablishment, and the future application of the teinds in the event of Disestablishment being desired by the people of Scotland, and decided upon by Parliament."

The day fixed for the discussion fell within the period required for the formation of the new Ministry; and in the expectation that my hon. Friend would be unable, at any rate for some time to come, to obtain another day for his Motion, I asked the Prime Minister whether he would appoint a Commission to inquire into the subject; and the right hon. Gentleman replied to the effect quoted in the Amendment which I have now the honour to submit to the House. This was a confirmation on the part of the Prime Minister, as head of the Government and Leader of the House, of what he had said as candidate for Mid Lothian; and I take it for granted that my right hon. Friend will support my Amendment, as carrying out his own declarations; in other words, that having withheld his support from the Bill of the hon. Member for the Inverness Burghs, he will, upon the same grounds, refuse to assist the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow to alter the present position of affairs. The main argument in support of the course which I would press upon the House is that this is exclusively a Scottish question, and that no clear and definite indication has yet been obtained of the wishes of the people of Scotland upon the matter. The Church of Scotland has played so important a part in the history of the nation that she is entitled to more considerate and deliberate treatment than the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow proposes to apply to her. It may be somewhat unfashionable in these days to lay great stress on the Treaty of Union; but if there is such a thing as a "fundamental law" it is that part of the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland under which the Presbyterian form of Church government was "established and confirmed," and it was declared that—

> "The said Presbyterian government shall be the only government of the Church within the Kingdom of Scotland," and should "continue without any alteration to the people of this land in all succeeding generations."

I quite admit that the Treaty of Union may be discussed in the Imperial Parliament; but surely any alteration of its terms ought to be considered with a due regard to the judgment of the two parties to the Treaty. But, granting that the people of Scotland are entitled to consideration in this matter, and that it is a question for them to decide, how are we to ascertain their views? That is exactly what I ask the Prime Minister and the Government to consider, if this question is to be raised at all. I maintain that we have no right, by a vote in Parliament, to disestablish the Scottish Church without, first of all, taking some steps to find out, in an unmistakable manner, what the people of Scotland, whose interests are involved, really desire. It might be possible to learn their views at a General Election in which the Church Question was put as a distinct issue. That was not the case at the last Election; and it is not likely to be the case at the next Election. The opinion might also be obtained by a Royal Commission, authorized to take such means as they might think proper to that end. That is the course which I have already proposed to the Government. Again, the opinion of the Scottish people might be learned by a *plébiscite*, or by the Constitutional mode of public Petitions. In a very light and airy way, my hon. Friend and others say that Petitions, particularly those from Scotland against Disestablishment, are really not to be trusted. For my part, I look upon Petitions addressed to Parliament as expressing, in a Constitutional way, the desires of the people. Now, I have to say, for my own county, that last year I presented 74 Petitions against Mr. Dick-Peddie's Disestablishment Bill. Those were signed by nearly 30,000 persons in Perthshire, out of a population of 90,000. On the other hand, I have presented this Session 32 Petitions, signed by 8,000 people in Western Perthshire, out of a population of 45,000, in favour of the Bill of the hon. Member for the Inverness Burghs. The Petitions in favour of that Bill over the whole country have been 595, signed by 177,000 persons. Where are the Petitions in favour of my hon. Friend's Motion? If he had been able to get up Petitions over the country, the House would have had some guidance as to the views of the people of Scotland. My hon. Friend probably thinks that the votes of Scottish Members in this House ought to be taken as fully and adequately representing the opinion of the people on this subject. I do not think so. But, supposing that were admitted, what is to be said of the division on the Declaratory Bill of the hon. Member for the Inverness Burghs, when 36, or exactly one-half of the Scottish Members, voted against the Bill, and of the other half 15 voted for the Bill and 21 abstained from voting? I do not, as I have already said, discuss the question of Disestablishment on its merits; I do not believe that religion and Christian liberality would lose by Disestablishment, or that it is essential to the Church in Scotland to have an official connection with the State. What I contend is this—the matter is one essentially for the decision of the Scottish people; and we are bound, in fairness, to wait until we have taken steps to find out what the genuine sentiment of Scotland is. I left the Established Church, with my minister, at the time of the Disruption, and I am still a member of the Free Church of Scotland. My sympathies, consequently, might be expected to be in favour of Disestablishment; but I claim fair play for the whole people of Scotland in this matter, and they can well judge what they require. I appeal to the Government to give no support to the Motion of my hon. Friend; to the House of Commons to pass no hasty judgment upon uncertain *data;* and I would ask hon. Representatives from Ireland to allow the people of Scotland to decide what concerns their interests, remembering that that principle guided the Scottish people at the General Election of 1868, when the question of the Church in Ireland was being discussed. My great desire is union amongst the Presbyterians of Scotland; I am convinced that before long, whether through Establishment or Disestablishment, this will be secured, for I believe that the people of Scotland will take the settlement of the controversy out of the hands of the clergy and politicians, so that their ecclesiastical interests may no longer be made the play of sectional rivalry or of political partizanship. This is not a Party question; it is one which affects, and should be considered from a regard to, the religious welfare of the people of Scotland, and dealt with in conformity with their wishes and decision. I beg leave to move the Amendment which stands in my name upon the Paper.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee), in rising to second the Amendment, said: I certainly am not going to follow the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) through the jungle of religious statistics into which he led the House. Nor am I inclined to imitate the speech of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for North Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter), who said that the discussion was, in his opinion, entirely academic. I do not object to the general principles as to the relation of Church and State which he laid down; but what right had he to say, as the Disestablishers are continually saying, that the Church of Scotland would be generously dealt with, and that she would be allowed to retain her fabrics? But who gave my hon. and learned Friend the right to deal with the property of the people of Scotland in that way, and what right has he to be generous in the matter? Passing from that, I would say that I, and those Scotch Members who think with me, have some claim to a little indulgence on the part of the House, because, to some extent, we occupy a special position with regard to this question. Most of the hon. Members from Scotland have come here pledged out-and-out either to Establishment as a principle, or to Disestablishment as a principle. Everybody knows, also, that hon. Members on the other side of the House are pledged to the maintenance of religious Establishments everywhere; it does not matter where; it does not particularly matter what. Like a leading light of the other House in former days, they say to the Churches—"Get yourselves established, and we will support you." With that principle I have no sympathy; neither have I any sympathy with those who come to this House pledged out-and-out to Disestablishment at any hazard, at any cost, and without regard to any circumstances whatsoever. The positions of those two Parties are the two extremes between which I think a large portion of this House is inclined to steer. I, at any rate, belong to neither of those extreme Parties; for I hold that the principle upon which this House, as representing the whole of the country, ought to proceed, is to disestablish a Church, if the people want you to do so, and only when the people want you to do it. The question of the Church Establishment in Scotland, above all others, must be dealt with in that way, and no other way. I have not found a single Disestablisher who does not agree with that principle. As far as I have read the speeches of out-and-out supporters of Disestablishment, from the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow downwards, I have not found that one of them is prepared to go to a Scotch audience and say that he is going to disestablish the Scotch Church, unless the Scotch people wish it, or that by the aid of English Liberationist and Irish votes he is going to force Disestablishment down the throats of the people of Scotland. Why, then, does the hon. Member bring in this Resolution? He has given a strange answer. He supports it, he says, because it is an abstract Resolution which is not meant to be the basis of legislation, and as to which it is not necessary that it should have any effect in its passing now. The hon. Gentleman must have supposed he was addressing the Glasgow Parliamentary Debating Society when he made such a statement; but I will tell the hon. Member that the House is not to be called upon to support an abstract Resolution, the Mover of which has not the courage to act upon it, neither has it sunk as yet to the level of a mere debating society, in which any abstract resolution it may pass would have no force whatever. If this Resolution is passed, it will have a most tremendous effect on the discussion of this question in Scotland. It will stimulate it, and bring it to settlement. ["Hear, hear!"] Yes; and I will tell you directly why that is not desirable. But the hon. Member says this is to be a test of Scotch opinion. Is it not trifling with the House to say that he is to invite the whole House to a division, in which the only effective votes will be the votes of the Scotch Members? I say that is not a satisfactory way at getting at what Scottish opinion on the question is. I have laid down the principle upon which I approach this question—that we are bound to take the opinion of the Scotch people in a more effective way. My hon. Friend has referred to the fundamental law of the Treaty of Union; and one conclusive reason why the House should follow the course I propose is to be found in the words of the Treaty of Union, which speaks of the holding and observing at all times of the Presbyterian Church in its present form as a fundamental and essential condition of any Treaty of Union between the two countries. Of course, I do not pretend that this House cannot deal with that or any other fundamental law; for there is no fundamental law beyond the scope and authority of the Imperial Parliament. But I say that when a Treaty has been made between a stronger and a weaker party, and where a provision has been put in at the instance of the weaker party, it should not be broken—and it has not been touched in the essential particulars of the Scotch Establishment from that time to this—I say it should not be broken until the House has satisfied itself that the nation, for whose benefit it was intended, desires it to be broken. That is the law which the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow invites us, by this Resolution, to abolish, without consulting the people of Scotland or ascertaining their opinions; but I am certain that it will not, in such a serious matter as this, act without a clear regard to the will of the nation concerned. I would deal with the Church of Scotland in relation to the Treaty of Union precisely as I would with any proposal to take away the jurisdiction of the Court of Session, and bring Scotland under the jurisdiction of the English Courts. Something has been said about the history of the hon. Gentleman's Resolution. There is no doubt this Resolution is a diminutive offspring and representative of the notorious Dick-Peddie Bill of last Session; but the hon. Member does not dare to stand up and defend that Bill, neither do I think anyone would stand up and defend its provisions in any open public meeting in Scotland now. The hon. Member has said he meant only to support the principle of the Bill; but surely the dignity of this House requires that an hon. Member who puts his name on the back of a Bill ought not to do so without a full sense of his responsibility for all that it contains. If I felt at liberty, I could tell a very interesting tale of how the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow tried to force this Resolution down the throat of every Liberal candidate whom he could get a chance of attacking. He tried to make it a test question; and with what disastrous results? There are, I believe, five Conservative Members in this House who owe their seats to the disinterested opposition of the hon. Member. I must say it is an unusual thing to see on the Front Bench opposite two ex-Law Officers of the Tory Party. The normal condition of things in Scotland is for the Tory Law Officers never to be able to find a seat in this House; and the two hon. Gentlemen opposite have been drawn from that gulf of disgrace by the influence of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow. I noticed that the hon. Member obtained some cheers from the Opposition Benches, and I suppose the cheers were dictated by a sense of gratitude. I have counted 10 Scotch Tories to-night on the Benches opposite. That is an entirely abnormal and unnecessary number; and I maintain it is to the hon. Member and this preposterous Resolution of his that these Gentlemen owe their seats. There is a constituency in Scotland which hitherto has preserved an unsullied Radical reputation—I mean the constituency of the Kilmarnock Burghs — which was formerly represented by the Gentleman who gave his name to the Bill of last Session; but, in his absence, the hon. Gentleman the Mover of this Resolution went down to help him, but ended by defeating him, and put the present Member in. What I have said is sufficient to put the House in possession of the character of the agitation which the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow has carried on. The Prime Minister went down to Mid Lothian, and in a speech at Edinburgh in November, in answer to a question whether he would vote for this Resolution, if it received the support of a majority of Scotch Members—more wary than the right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain), who had previously been caught in the trap—he, the old Parliamentary hand, said he would not accept such a vote on this Resolution as any indication of the opinion of the Scotch Members on the subject, because he would strive to send up Liberal Members on quite different issues. That put an end to the Resolution for the time being; but the right hon. Member did not succeed in reducing his Colleagues to loyalty. In my opinion, therefore, the opinion of Members on the point is a matter of private interest only; it is not a matter of present public importance. Yet the Scotch Disestablishment Association deliberately and emphatically repudiated the authority of the Leader of the Liberal Party in a letter which the Secretary then issued; and an offensive circular had also been sent to Members the other day, threatening that if they did not vote for the Resolution their constituencies would be worked up against them. I do not hesitate to say that the hon. Member and his Friends, in formulating and pushing this Resolution, have exhibited disloyalty to the Liberal Party, and have not been faithful to the most elementary rules of Party discipline. I would solemnly appeal to Liberal Members not to believe that the hon. Member on this question represents either Scotch or English Liberalism by bringing it forward when it can only be done at the risk of a great Party division. He couples the Resolution with fine principles of religious equality; but some gentlemen who have supported it in the country have said that, while they are to destroy Establishments at home, they are to maintain them abroad, at the expense of the State, wherever the State has a representative—Army or Navy. But there are two denominations which are to have no benefit—namely, the Roman Catholics and the Unitarians. That will show that, in voting for this Resolution, hon. Members will be supporting principles and practices which are entirely inconsistent, not merely with religious equality, but, what is ten times more important, religious liberty. I entreat my hon. Friends around me not to suppose that, in voting for the Resolution, they are voting with the true and tried champions of religious equality all over the world. Then, I want to appeal to hon. Members from Ireland. Their influence in this House is considerable, and I have to thank them for the support they have given to a Motion in which I am deeply interested. I want them to consider the bearing of this Resolution on the general situation of politics in this House. The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow cannot carry his point, except at the risk of breaking up the unity of the Liberal Party, which at this moment is as important to them—the Irish Members—as to any section of the House. If they permit the hon. Member to carry his Resolution, those who have been rebellious before will become perfectly impracticable, for they will push this small measure of Disestablishment forward into every constituency in a reckless manner, utterly regardless of what the future consequences may be. It is therefore to their interest to watch narrowly the course taken by the hon. Member, and not to suppose that, though he represents on this occasion views that are sometimes associated with the Radical Party, they will be doing the right thing for that Party, or for themselves, in giving support to the Motion. Let me remind the House also that what I claim for Scotland and the Church of Scotland is that, in the interpretation of the solemn contract between England and Scotland, the Scotch people alone should be allowed to interfere. I have not said a word in defence of Establishment as a political principle; but I say that, looking to the history of the Treaty of Union, it is not fair to Scotland, or the Church of Scotland, or the people of that country, that this House should pass a prejudicial Resolution affecting the question until the people of Scotland had been consulted. I would appeal to the Government, first, because of the statements of the Prime Minister, to which my hon. Friend has alluded, and also because of the position the Government took up the other day in reference to the Bill of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay). The speech on that occasion of the then Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) was a reiteration, on the part of the Government, of the views of the Prime Minister, and a declaration that they would abide by the terms of what the right hon. Gentleman called the "truce of God" on the question. But if there is to be any truce, it must be a two-sided truce; and as the Government have applied it the other day against the hon. and learned Member for the Inverness Burghs, so I call on them now to observe it against the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow. But I would also appeal to the Government to do something to take this question out of its present position. It is the duty of the Government to stick to the declarations of their illustrious Leader; but I think they should at once shoulder the obligations those declarations impose—namely, that having declared that the public opinion in Scotland is the only test by which this question is to be settled, they should take upon themselves the duty of finding out how the public opinion of Scotland lies in regard to the question. There is only one Party in the House which can gain by Disestablishment, or by leaving the question in its present position of uncertainty. Hon. Members opposite would gain by Disestablishment, because a large number of Liberals would at once walk over to their ranks. That is an undeniable truth. But, next to Disestablishment, hon. Members opposite will profit by the question being left a burning and an agitating question. They are not particularly anxious to have it settled. Their attachment to the Church of Scotland is singularly disinterested, because the greater portion of them do not derive any particular spiritual benefit from its ministrations; but, being an Establishment, they would dearly like to have the question whether it is to be disestablished or not pressed on the people at every Election. Various plans have been proposed to the Government, and I would offer a suggestion that the question of Disestablishment—in other words, the partial Repeal of the Union between England and Scotland—should be submitted to the people in the form of a Constitutional Amendment. I have had ample opportunity of watching the working of the Constitution of the United States of America; and if there were a question like this in any of its 30 or 40 Republics, I do not believe there is one of them in which the Legislature would undertake to settle it, except by referring the question directly, yes or no, to the whole voters of the State. That plan is spoken of as the *plébiscite;* and, though I do not like the name, or its associations, I leave its defence to those who wish to apply it to the Liquor Question; yet, on the question now before the House—in other words, the question of the partial Repeal of the Union between England and Scotland—it is precisely the kind of question which, in the United States of America, is submitted under the name of Constitutional amendment to the votes of the entire population. I have seen the principle in operation, and I can say it works as easy as anything. This is the practical suggestion which I venture to make to the Government. I know that, until something of that sort is done, the duty of this House as a whole is perfectly clear. Considering not merely the national, but the international, title by which the Church of Scotland holds its place in the country, it is clearly the duty of this House not to summon that Church to answer at their Bar until the whole people of Scotland appear as prosecutors.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "having regard to the declaration recently made by the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the appointment of a Royal Commission on the subject of Disestablishment in Scotland, to the effect that, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, 'this important question of the continuance and circumstances of the Established Church in Scotland should be left as much as possible to the spontaneous action and consideration of the Country,' this House declines to entertain a proposal for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Scottish Church until the wishes of the people of Scotland in relation thereto shall have been ascertained,"—(*Sir Donald Currie,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) said, that he had listened with pleasure to the eloquent speech of the hon. Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson), and had to thank him for the effective onslaught he had made on the Motion now before the House. He (Mr. J. A. Campbell) joined him in his opinion of the Motion, although not upon exactly the same grounds. He thought that, so far, they had no reason to complain of the tone of the debate; and he was glad to say that no religious animosity had been evinced during its progress. He thought, however, the House should be careful not to proceed to deal with this question without accurate information, and without a clear understanding of what was the issue before them. They had listened to eloquent references to the history of the Church, and to the benefits which the Kingdom of Scotland had derived from the Church of Scotland. The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), however, had referred, in support of his Motion, to the position of the Church now and recently, rather than to the history of the Church in the distant past, and had referred especially to the last 40 years, as if that would strengthen the position he had taken. He (Mr. Campbell) had no objection that special regard should be directed to the last 40 years, for he thought that a consideration of the history of the Church, not during past centuries, but during the last 40 years, would itself be sufficient to justify the House in rejecting the Motion. Forty years ago the Church of Scotland received a very heavy blow by the great Secession which then took place; and if there had been nothing in the Church, and nothing in its position as an Established Church, to gain the confidence of the people, they would have seen the Church unable to rally from that blow. But what had the result been? They had seen the Church gradually and rapidly recover its strength, and at the present moment it was stronger than it had ever been. His hon. Friend asked if that was not a proof that the Church could do largely without its endowments? He (Mr. Campbell) did not know that it could be said that the old endowments had not been of considerable use during the last 40 years; but what he maintained was that its position as an Established Church had much to do with the manner in which it had rallied. The hon. Member referred to the numbers connected with the Church. On the question of statistics, the country would have been better informed to-day if it had not been for the action of the Party opposite, who effectually opposed the inclusion of religious connection in taking the Census. That being so, there was no alternative but to take such statistics from the Churches as were available. He would not enter into the statistics further than to say that, notwithstanding the way in which the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow had spoken, the Church of Scotland was not a mere section of the population, but had a larger membership than the other two great Presbyterian Churches in Scotland put together. The defenders of the Church did not conceal the fact that it was very weak in the Highlands; but what they said was that, even in the Highlands, it was not nearly so weak as it formerly was. And he asked how many of the people in the Highlands had the least sympathy with the Motion of the hon. Member? Than the Highlands there was not a place where there was more determined opposition to the idea of dispensing with the Established Church. He appealed to those who knew Scotland, and would ask was it not the fact that the Church of Scotland was really the increasing Church at the present moment? His hon. Friend had said that the United Presbyterian Church held that the connection of Church and State was un-Scriptural and unjust. Certain members of that Church might hold that opinion, but it was not an article of the creed of the Church; and he asked his hon. Friend if he was not aware that many members of the United Presbyterian Church, especially among the laity, had no sympathy whatever with so extravagant a view? The question was—what was the attitude of the people of Scotland now? He was not afraid of ascertaining the wishes of the people; but he maintained that their wishes had already been ascertained. The agitation on this subject, which was not, by the way, of native growth, but was prosecuted at the instigation of a great society in England—the Liberation Society—was not a successful one, as had been shown in various ways. It took its origin in England through the Liberation Society, and was not received with enthusiasm in Scotland. The evidence of want of success of that movement was given last year in the manner in which the Bill which had been referred to of Mr. Dick-Peddie was received in Scotland. The hon. Gentleman had reflected upon that Bill, and said that, in some respects, its provisions were indefensible. That might be so; but was that Bill not defended—was it not advocated—by the Liberation Society? It received their sanction; and they had no reason to suppose that the Society would in future have much better ideas of how to deal with this question than they found formulated in that Bill. He would not refer further to the Petitions against that measure. The House was already familiar with the statistics regarding them. But he would remind them of the careful statistics taken some time ago in Mid Lothian, where it was found, not amongst children of 14 years, but amongst the electors—men of full age—that there was no less a proportion than 69 per cent who formally signed a declaration that they were opposed to the Disestablishment of the Church. Reference had been made to the revenues of the Church. Some hon. Members had spoken of the old revenues of the Church, amounting to something like £370,000 a-year, in a way that was hardly defensible. They had spoken of them as something that Parliament had entire control over, as if they were public funds in the ordinary sense of the term. Those old endowments were what remained of the religious patrimony of the people. They were all that was left to the Church from the scramble which took place at the Reformation by Nobles and others who helped themselves to what was the property of the Church. Some hon. Members said it was not the property of the Church of Scotland—but that it was the property of the Roman Catholic Church. But there was no doubt that a considerable portion of those teinds belonged to the Church long before the time when the Romish Church held sway in Scotland. At the Reformation not the Parliament, but the people of Scotland, declared themselves, as a body, in favour of the Reformed principles; and they then rescued all that remained of the Church property, and applied it in a manner which, in their estimation, better fulfilled the purpose of the original donors than leaving it in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. These teinds, under the sanction of Parliament, were set apart for the religious instruction of the people. What money came from the State, again, and was given to the Church—some £17,000 a-year—was merely a part of what the State had taken from the Church, and was, therefore, only a restoration of Church property. In like manner the £23,500 a-year which the Church received from burgh funds might be held to come from Church property, which was made over to the burghs. The hon. Member spoke of the incomes of the three Presbyterian Churches, and said the joint income of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches was £1,000,000, and of the Church of Scotland £750,000, half of which came from voluntary sources. That, however, required some explanation. The hon. Member spoke of these figures as if they referred to similar things, which they did not. Taking first the statement as to the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches, while he (Mr. J. A. Campbell) did not complain of the way the accounts were kept by these Churches, yet it was necessary to observe that part of the £1,000,000 consisted of interest on investments, pew rents, and miscellaneous receipts of different kinds. These were not voluntary contributions. He found that the Free Church of Scotland reported receipts in 1884 to the sum of £626,000. Now, that was a noble sum; and he did not wish in any degree to detract from the credit due to that Church in respect of its liberal giving. The Free Church had done great service, not only to other Churches in Scotland and England, but to the whole world, by the example it had set of liberal giving. But they must take care they did not do injustice in the way they used those figures, which included its whole receipts from every source. In the sum reported for 1884, upwards of £33,000 was from interest on invested funds, which were not voluntary givings of that year. Then, again, the Free Church was credited with £21,883 for education; but the amount of the contributions for that object was only £2,688, and the balance of £19,000 odd was composed of Government grants, fees, and other receipts at the training colleges and schools. The figures which were quoted for the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches represented their total revenue from all sources, and not voluntary gifts alone. With reference to the item of interest for investments, which he already noticed, he would remind the House that if the sums were added together so as to show what had been done in a number of years, in the course of 20 years they would take credit twice for all the invested legacies and donations. Passing from that figure of £1,000,000, which was accurate as to the total amount raised by the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches, he would ask the House what the hon. Member compared with it? The hon. Member said the voluntary gifts of the Church of Scotland were half of its whole revenue, which revenue, he said, was £750,000. The hon. Member's authority for that statement was a Report of the Church, which, however, referred to an entirely different thing from the total receipts. It was a Report of the voluntary liberality of the Church, and contained only the new gifts of the year. The sum in that Report for the year referred to was £304,000, which did not include interest on investments, new endowments, grants from different trust funds, or seat rents. If these were added, with miscellaneous receipts connected with Missions of the Church, the sum of £304,000 would have to be raised to £501,265. He apologized for detaining the House with those explanations; but the figures given by the hon. Member for Glasgow would have been misleading if not explained. He now asked what was the meaning of this Motion? This Motion went further than the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of Scotland. It was not aimed against the Church of Scotland on any special grounds, such as that it had failed to discharge its functions and was unworthy of the confidence of the country. The whole drift of the Motion and of the speech of the hon. Gentleman was that all connection between Church and State should be put an end to. It was, therefore, plain that this Motion closely touched the Church of England as well. The gentlemen who had, with much assiduity, travelled through Scotland on the Disestablishment crusade had made no secret that it was their aim to secure the Disestablishment of the Church of England as well as that of the Church of Scotland. If the Church of Scotland was attacked on general principles and with arguments that struck at all Establishments, the Church of England also was directly menaced. The effort which the Prime Minister made at the General Election to keep the questions of the two Churches separate would not succeed if the Church of Scotland was attacked on the principle of having religious equality. If the Motion received the support of the House it would affect the whole Christian Constitution of the country, because they had a Monarchy with a distinct religious Constitution; and if the principles of absolute religious equality were to be introduced they could not maintain that position. The union of Churches had been spoken of as an argument for the Motion. If the position of the Church as an Establishment was a bar to union, why, in the name of common sense, were those Churches which were not established not united? Why was there a variety of non-established Churches? It had been said that they must either level up or level down. But there was another course, and that was to recognize and support a Church that had the confidence and sympathy of the people. The hon. Member said that if the Church of Scotland was disestablished it would become more vigorous than ever. He did not at all agree with that statement. It was true that the Church did not depend on Establishment, and did not depend on endowments; but it would suffer seriously by Disestablishment. But what would be the result to the State? If they were to have a State without a Church, it would mean—as the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department said—the severance of the tie between the State and Christianity. The hon. and learned Member for Aberdeen had argued that the present privileges of the Church were very slight; he stated them to be that assessments could be levied on the heritors of a parish for church and manse repairs, and that its Theological Professors were supported from the Universities' funds. Now, he (Mr. Campbell) did not dispute that the provisions for church and manse repairs in the old parishes was of value; but he was surprised to hear it brought forward in so prominent a way; and as to the Theological Chairs, he would refer the hon. and learned Member to the Treaty of Union, in which he would find how important a place is given to the maintenance of the Universities with a view to teaching of religion; and he would remind him that the Theological Professors were chiefly paid from teinds, not from University general funds, and that, in point of fact, they did not teach only Church of Scotland students. What the members of the Church regarded as the greatest of its privileges was that it secured to the poor man in every parish the services of a minister. He had had an Amendment on the Paper to the Motion now before the House; but he had allowed it to drop. His reason for doing so was that, because of the attitude taken up by the Government on a recent occasion, he gathered that they would not interfere in an active way in asserting the position of the Church of

Scotland, and, therefore, would not have supported his Amendment. He, therefore, contented himself with opposing the Motion, in which he expected the support of the Government, after the declaration of the Prime Minister. As to the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for West Perthshire, he was not afraid of a reference to the people of Scotland; but, as he had already said, he did not see the call for it, and he considered that neither as regards the present position of the Church of Scotland nor the wishes of the people of Scotland was there any reason why such a proposal as that now before the House should be entertained.

MR. C. S. PARKER (Perth): At this late hour I will not detain the House by going over any of the arguments which we have lately heard from both sides of the House. The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), who brought forward the Motion, made a most frank avowal in regard to it—namely, that he has introduced it purely as an abstract Resolution, and that in the present Parliament, in his opinion, he could see no way of taking action upon it. That being the case, the hon. Member stands in the position of asking the House to affirm this extremely abstract proposition—that, in the opinion of the House, a certain thing ought to be done which he admits cannot be done during this Parliament, and to declare its definite opinion that the Church of Scotland ought to be disestablished and disendowed. In considering that question, I think the English Liberal Members of this House will be disposed to ask what is the opinion of the people of Scotland upon the subject. They know perfectly well that the people of Scotland are capable of managing their own affairs, and especially their own ecclesiastical affairs. I do not find from history that the interference of England in the ecclesiastical affairs of Scotland has ever been of a fortunate or satisfactory character; and if, therefore, the English Liberal Members wish to be guided by the opinion of the people of Scotland, they will find that in Scotland that opinion is divided, and somewhat equally divided. I was asked just now by an English Member—"Why do you not make up your minds on this question as you do upon others, and then we would vote with you?" Why we do not do so I cannot say. But the fact that we have not done so was very much emphasized at the time of the General Election by the words which fell from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, whom we are all glad to see in his place listening to this debate, when he gave it as his definite judgment upon the state of opinion in Scotland that the subject was not ripe for action. The question of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of Scotland was not an issue raised at the General Election in such a way that the votes of the Members returned at that General Election could be regarded as determining the question with any degree of certainty; because, naturally, when it was known that nothing was likely to be done in the present Parliament, the attempt to sway the allegiance of Liberal Churchmen to their Party stopped. It was the fact that when, a short time ago, the House was called upon to discuss a Bill, the general tenour of which was to impugn the position of the Established Church of Scotland, we were told from the Treasury Bench that we should remember—those of us, at least, who had given pledges on the subject—that there were certain obligations which must be observed in the truce which had been entered into; and that if, on the one hand, nothing was done to disestablish the Church of Scotland, on the other hand nothing must be done to improve the position of the Established Church at the expense of other Churches. I believe that was a consideration which was very influential in the division which took place on the Bill of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay); and probably, if that Bill had been brought forward under better circumstances, it might have had a different fate in store for it. In looking closely at the words of the Motion we are called on to affirm to-night, I see there is in it one expression —not ambiguous, it is true, in the mind of the hon. Gentleman who moves it, but which has a certain practical ambiguity about it—I mean the expression "The Church of Scotland." If by the Church of Scotland were meant only the Established Church, I, for one, should feel disposed to give my vote for the Resolution in the sense of the first reason which is given for it in a paper circulated by the hon. Member (Dr. Cameron)—namely, that as a large majority of the Scottish people are Presbyterian, and as the Presbyterian Churches are closely allied in government and discipline, there is no adequate reason—and I should say there would be no justification—for maintaining one of those Churches in exclusive possession of the endowments, and all the privileges of a connection with the State. If that were to go on as it is, I, for one, would certainly be found voting for the Resolution. But I say that there is a larger sense to be attached to the words "Church of Scotland," meaning the whole Churches of Scotland—not of all denominations, but those which hold the Presbyterian form of government, and having identically the same standards of doctrine, have practical unity, although it has, unfortunately, been broken up for a time. But we are told on both sides that there is a desire for union. We are told by the Resolutions of the Assembly of the Established Church that there is a desire for union on their part; and we are told by the congregations that there exists a strong desire for the union of all the Presbyterian Churches. But how is that union to be brought about? The one side desire to bring about that union by Disestablishment; and the other side, those belonging to the Established Church, think it should be brought about by a modification of the Establishment, so as to suit those who are at present outside of it. Well, but upon any question of the alteration of the Establishment it seems to me the principle might be laid down that all the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland ought to be consulted, and consulted through their recognized governments, before any definite course of action is taken. The hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay), in bringing in his Bill, made the mistake of attempting to alter the conditions of the Establishment before all the Churches concerned had been brought into frank and free communication with each other in reference to the subject. If these Churches tell us that they desire union, I think we may call on them to enter into conference with each other. Some eight years ago an attempt was made to see what Parliament could do in the matter, and an endeavour was made to obtain an inquiry conducted by Parliament itself, not merely into the wishes of the people of Scotland, but an inquiry into the principles which were keeping the Free Presbyterian Churches of Scotland apart; but at the time there was no response from public opinion, or from Parliament itself, and the proposed inquiry fell to the ground. To-night, on the other hand, we are asked to assent to the proposal for a Royal Commission to inquire not into principles, but into the wishes of the Scotch people. I think, if there is to be any inquiry of the kind, it should be into principles; and the proper mode to conduct it, whether the inquiry were made by a Royal Commission or by a Committee of this House, would be to call on the leaders of the Free Presbyterian Churches to come together and state their views, and then either a Commission or a Committee of this House could sit in judgment on their proposals. But, failing Parliamentary action of that kind, I would humbly venture to suggest, in the first place, to the Established Church of Scotland, that their proper course, instead of bringing in Bills and endeavouring to pass them without reference to the other Churches, would be to make overtures—however such overtures might be received, whether frankly or with coldness—to the other Churches, to enter into conference with them, and see whether anything could be done to bring about an agreement as to the terms—just as the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church very nearly, but not quite, succeeded in arriving at terms with each other. If the Free Presbyterian Churches of Scotland would take that course, I believe the House would see its way to assisting them to a conclusion which would be acceptable to the whole of the Presbyterians of Scotland. In the meantime, I feel that I cannot give my support to this Resolution that the Church of Scotland ought to be disestablished and disendowed, not only because it is a very curt and short way of dealing with the Act of Union in regard to Scotland, but also because, to my mind, the Church of Scotland bears a larger meaning than the Established Church; and I am not prepared to say that there are not terms of union by which an Established Church in Scotland might not be maintained. I thank the House for the attention with which it has heard me.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I hope the House will allow me to say a few words upon this question, which is one upon which I feel very deeply. The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) has introduced a direct Motion for Disestablishment on the old Liberation Society lines. I do not think the hon. Member had anything new to say, and his argument fell with flatness on the House. Of course, the hon. Member does not believe in an Established Church, nor does he believe in its having any claims; nor is he a party to that truce which is recommended for this question from high places. Not one of these points were raised at the General Election; but they were allowed to stand over until a more convenient opportunity. The hon. Member is to be commended for his straightforwardness; for it is better to meet an open enemy than a false friend. The House ought, therefore, to come to a direct issue on the question raised by the Motion of the hon. Gentleman. Do not let us have this question put off from day to day and from year to year; while, in the meantime, those who support Disestablishment attempt, by every means in their power, to discourage and weaken one of the great institutions of the country. Why should there be a breach of neutrality now in regard to the Church which the country, by the Act of Union, is bound to maintain, and the Church of which the Sovereign is the head? Surely there ought to be an attitude of friendliness so long as that institution remains. I will not trouble the House with any reply to the arguments of the hon. Member on the point of Disestablishment. I think my hon. Friend the Member for the University of Glasgow (Mr. J. A. Campbell) has done that very effectively; but there is this to be said for the Church of Scotland—that it was not content to stand still, and to do nothing in its best interests. I would appeal to all who know anything of the matter whether it has not been the case that, year by year, it has been not only adding to the number of its members, but increasing in liberality, in efficiency, and in the means of religion which it provides for the people? I would rather have a direct attack upon the Established Church than have it praised so faintly as by the hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for Perth (Mr. Parker). The hon. Member thinks it better to let the Church alone this year; that it is not a good time for dealing with it; and he says, in the meantime, let us try and ascertain what the wishes of the people of Scotland are on the subject. On that point I wish to address this question to the hon. Gentleman—How are the wishes of the people of Scotland to be ascertained, unless through their elected Representatives? It is a marvel to me how distinguished statesmen can present themselves to Scotch constituencies, and not have an opinion whether the Church of Scotland ought to be maintained or not. I should have thought that the Prime Minister, of all others, ought to have had an opinion of his own on this subject. Surely it is not for him to wait until public opinion is pronounced, but to guide and lead public opinion; and yet, when he went down to Mid Lothian last November, he said he had no opinion of his own, and he was content to wait until the wishes of the people of Scotland were pronounced. I come next to my right hon. Friend who now represents East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen), and he, also, has no opinion on the subject. Indeed, he seemed to have so little knowledge of the question that, when pressed, he was in a great difficulty about giving an answer to the questions put to him. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, who represents South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), also, has no opinion on the subject. He, too, is willing to wait for the opinion of the people of Scotland to be expressed—Heaven knows how. So that here you have three Members of the Privy Council, three distinguished statesmen representing Scotch constituencies, who have no opinion on this question. How on earth is the opinion of the people of Scotland to be expressed, except through their elected Representatives? And then let me remind the Prime Minister that he, of all living men, owes a debt to Scotland, and to the Church of Scotland, in this matter; because he is the last of a distinguished band of statesmen who took a very fatal step in respect to the Church of Scotland. It was through a grave mistake of Lord Aberdeen and of Sir James Graham that the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843 took place. I have known this question from my boyhood, and I remember the deep regret which was expressed by many who still adhered to the Church at being obliged to part with many valued members whose consciences constrained them to leave it, because Sir Robert Peel would not give them the relief which they claimed. If a different course had been taken by the House of Commons we should have never had the Disruption of 1843. The Church of Scotland has since had to recover by slow and painful steps the crushing blow she then sustained; and we have seen in 1884 steps taken which even went much further than those asked for by Dr. Chalmers, and those who went out from the Church with him, to have the Church of Scotland set really free from all the hindrances which have for so many years hampered her usefulness; until now, and not by State control, the Church of Scotland was among the freest in Christendom; and it has that absolute freedom of choice in its own ministers which is one of the most precious birthrights of the people of Scotland. The hon. Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson), who made, in some respects, a very remarkable speech, called upon the Government to take the lead on this question. The House has a right to ask the Government to state what they are going to do in the matter, and what lead they are going to take. The Prime Minister has promised—and I think his declaration was most distinct—that he will oppose any Motion for Disestablishment in this Parliament; but we have a right to ask for more than that from the right hon. Gentleman. We want something better than neutrality towards a National Institution; some words, at least, which will not cripple or hamper the Church of Scotland in her work, but which will enable her to face the day when the question is put to the people of Scotland for decision with confidence and strength. The right hon. Gentleman has had a remarkable answer from his own constituency on this question. As my hon. Friend the Member for the University of Glasgow has referred to it, I would like to say one word more upon the matter. I believe that a paper was presented to every elector of Mid Lothian for his signature, stating whether he was in favour of Disestablishment or not. Deducting those who had left their houses, or who could not be found, and deducting, also, three parishes, one of which contained more than 1,000 electors, seven-twelfths of the whole constituency signed the papers issued to them against Disestablishment. There was not a single parish in the county in which there was not a majority against Disestablishment varying from 55 to 89 per cent. If that is not a distinct answer from the Metropolitan constituency of Scotland, represented by the right hon. Gentleman himself, I do not know how an answer is to be obtained. The hon. Member for Dundee also made an appeal to the House on the question which I desire to meet. The hon. Member said the House ought to deal with the question in some way, because, if it is left unsettled, the Conservative Party of Scotland would be the gainers either way. They would gain by a declaration in favour of Disestablishment, because they would drive many Liberals into their camp; and they would thus naturally gain a Party triumph, and they would also gain by the absence of a declaration which left the question still unsettled and in doubt. Now, I say with all sincerity that, for my part, I seek for no Party gain or triumph in this matter. Not long ago I attended a great meeting at Glasgow, presided over by the Earl of Stair, which was addressed by the Duke of Argyll and others, and nearly every man who addressed it was a Scotch Liberal. It cannot be said, therefore, that those who are opposed to Disestablishment do not represent the true views of the Liberals of Scotland. But, Sir, I am ready to join heartily with the Liberals on this question. I should deeply deplore if the fate of the Church of Scotland was to rest with the Conservative Party, and that the Liberal Members of that Church should desert her in the hour of trial. We are told that the Conservative Party have pressed this question before the constituencies, and it is denied that Liberals have wished to raise the question. We were driven to do so by the attitude taken by our opponents; because if we had not pressed it before the notice of the constituencies we should have allowed judgment to go by default. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary to do so. The result was that it was made a test question at the General Election so effectually that it became almost necessary for the most Liberal Members to say to their constituents that they were not in favour of Disestablishment, in this Parliament at least. I have no wish to detain the House at any length; and I shall only say one thing more, which presses strongly on my mind, before I sit down. The reconstruction of the Church must be gradual. We cannot expect men to come out of the Free Church in great bodies, and we have no wish to gain a triumph over the Free Church. I think we ought to open our doors wide, and to let men feel that they can return to the Church of their fathers and ancestors without degradation. We say that the Church of Scotland has been opening its doors very wide, year by year, for the last 15 years. We have made a liberal declaration of the terms on which we can receive all separated brethren; and there is pending in the coming year a measure by which the ministers of all the Presbyterian Churches will be enabled to enter the Church of Scotland, and accept the benefits of that Church absolutely without degradation, or the renunciation of any of their professions whatever. In the debate which took place on the Bill of the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay) a very remarkable declaration was made—a declaration that will sink deeply into the mind of the people of Scotland, although that Bill was defeated. I hope that that debate, and the adoption of that Bill by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who possess full legislative powers, will have the effect of showing how the principles held by the Free Church of Scotland are equally in the possession of the Established Church. I sincerely trust that the result of the debate to-night will be to give new life and hope to the Church of Scotland, and to put an end for many years to come to such disturbing and dangerous Motions as that of the hon. Member opposite (Dr. Cameron).

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I wish, Mr. Speaker, to say a few words on this question, partly in answer to the appeal of the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Fergusson), although I am afraid I shall not be able to give him entire satisfaction. Certainly, when he calls upon me to administer words of comfort and relief to the Church of Scotland, by acknowledging her zeal and efficiency in the prosecution of her work, I have no difficulty in meeting him, and in freely using such words. But then I cannot use them to the Church of Scotland exclusively. I am bound to extend them to the other Presbyterian Bodies, which have so long and so greatly contributed to the work of religion in Scotland. Then, Sir, the right hon. Baronet thinks there is special ground of appeal to me, as a party in procuring the passing of the Act of Parliament which, in 1843, led to the Disruption of the Scottish Church. That Church, undoubtedly, before the Disruption, commanded the adhesion of a very large majority of the people of Scotland, and its ministers were distinguished not only by general zeal and devotedness, but by having among them a number of most remarkable men, the large majority of whom, undoubtedly, joined the Free Church when the Secession took place. I had, however, nothing to do with the preparation of that Bill. I was not a Member of the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel at the time it was prepared. I was in the Government, it is true, but I had no connection with the preparation of it; and although on most subjects I had the happiness of agreeing with my noble Friend the Earl of Aberdeen, for whom I did then entertain—and for whose memory I do now entertain—the most profound respect and affection, yet at that time I did not agree with Lord Aberdeen upon the question relating to the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. On that ground, therefore, I cannot meet the appeal of the right hon. Baronet. But then the right hon. Baronet says he thinks it is the duty of Gentlemen prominent in the Liberal Party to lead opinion in Scotland on these ecclesiastical subjects. Well, Sir, but the people of Scotland have been accustomed, on these ecclesiastical subjects, in a very eminent degree to think for themselves — they have not been accustomed to seek leadership, or to accept leadership at the hands of political partizans. It appears to be, in the view of the right hon. Baronet, a great error that neither of the two right hon. Gentlemen representing divisions of Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen and Mr. Childers), nor I myself, have undertaken to teach the people of Scotland what is their duty and what is their interest on this important question. Well, Sir, that may be his opinion; but our opinion—certainly my opinion—is directly the reverse. My opinion is that there never was a people on the face of the earth so highly educated, so perfectly organized in respect of the means of giving effect to their religious convictions through the medium of an established ministry, as the people of Scotland in this generation of ours. I am not at all disposed to think that we can teach them what appertains to their interest, or to their duty, beyond what they know themselves. I am prepared to pay great respect to an authentic intimation of their opinion; but I am not prepared to depart from the grounds distinctly laid down by my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) many years ago, when he stated, on his own behalf, and on behalf of the Party generally for whom he spoke, that they were not disposed to interfere, as a Party, in the matter, but that they would be disposed to lend the greatest attention to the genuine and clear conviction of the people of Scotland, whatever it might be. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Glasgow University (Mr. J. A. Campbell) has stated, with great fairness, that this question may be discussed on either of two grounds—whether there ought, or ought not, to be a connection between Church and State; and it may also be discussed, as the House will candidly admit, upon the ground of circumstances peculiar to the Church of Scotland. Well, Sir, my own view has been that, in many cases, these questions ought to be decided rather with reference to the peculiar circumstances of the case than with reference to an abstract principle. In the case of the Church of Ireland, it appeared to me—and it appeared, I think, to the majority of this House—that, without pronouncing any opinion upon the question of Church Establishment generally, it was quite clear that that was not a case where the Establishment ought to be maintained. In attachment to the principles of Church Establishment, it appears to me it would have been perfectly consistent to recognize the fact that the maintenance of the Church, as an Establishment, was not for the interests either of religion or of the people Ireland. In the same manner, I confess I think that the case of the Church of Scotland is one which may be very fairly discussed. I do not say it may not fairly be discussed on the ground of broad abstract principles; but I think it is one which may fairly be discussed on its special circumstances, because those circumstances are very peculiar. You will not find a case upon the face of the earth where there is a particular Body established in the common sense of that term, and endowed, and where by the side of that Body are two other Bodies not established and not endowed, and both of them maintaining the very same doctrine, the very same government, and the very same discipline as the Established Church, but, if possible, maintaining them with greater rigour and precision, and having either quitted the Church of Scotland, or, as in the case of the Free Church, been driven out of the Church of Scotland—["No, no!"]—because of their most faithful, and strict, and uncompromising adherence to principles which they were then told were totally incompatible with the principles of Establishment at all, by the Government of Sir Robert Peel, but told, I am bound to say, with the general concurrence of political Parties in Scotland; and those are the very principles which we are now told are compatible with, and loudly professed by, the Church of Scotland. These are the circumstances as to which I differ from the right hon. Baronet; and I do not think it desirable in any interest, either religious or political, that the Leaders of political Parties should become the Leaders upon such a question as this. I do not think the intervention of political Parties, as such, does always sweeten the atmosphere. We are performing our duty more wisely and faithfully by keeping the question open on the ground taken up by my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale than we should do if we accepted the advice of the right hon. Baronet opposite. But, Sir, I admit that the question before us is an intricate question. It does not involve any of those great considerations which, undoubtedly, may be brought into the debate upon their merits, and in the deepest sense of the word as to whether there ought, or not, to be a secular establishment of religion. We have before us at present what lies upon narrower grounds. The hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Glasgow states that the Government is pledged upon this subject to oppose the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron). That I do not think is strictly accurate, and for this reason. When I spoke on this subject in Scotland I did not speak on behalf of a Government, for I did not belong to one; and I had not that degree of power which would enable me to bind my Friends and Colleagues. ["Oh, oh!"] I beg hon. Members' pardon; but I have had as much experience in considering the relations of politicians as they have, and I think I am right when I say—I do not mean to push my proposition to extremes —that the case is one perfectly distinct from the case of a declaration made on behalf of a Government by the Chief of that Government. But, as far as I am concerned, I acknowledge the engagement which the hon. Gentleman has quoted. I do not seek for one moment to depart from it. Perhaps I ought to have fulfilled it three or four weeks ago by voting against the Bill which was proposed by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Inverness Burghs (Mr. Finlay) in a speech which, though I could not concur with the conclusion at which it arrived, was a speech of admirable ability. It was my disposition to avoid entrance into controversies of this kind which made me refrain from taking any part in the debate which took place on that occasion. My impression is that most of those who are now pleading for the maintenance of a truce in regard to the question of Establishment, and are calling upon the Government on that account to oppose the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for the College Division of Glasgow, did, on that occasion, entirely forget the doctrine of the truce, and did give a warm and vigorous support to a Motion which was far from being founded on the principle of truce, the principle of neutrality, or the principle of postponement, but sought to give a new and most solid and substantial confirmation to the principles of Establishment. I own it appears to me that great inconsistency marked the conduct of hon. Gentlemen who gave that vote on a former night, and who now desire that we should oppose the Motion of my hon. Friend on the ground that this question of Disestablishment and Disendowment is not a question which can be handled practically in this Parliament. But this inconsistency in them will not justify me in acting inconsistently myself, and I wish to act in strict consistency with the declaration I made at the General Election. The effect of that declaration it is for others to estimate. It may have been small or great—upon that matter I will not enter. I contended that the question of Establishment ought not to be made a test question, just as strongly as hon. Gentlemen opposite, standing for English constituencies, contended that it ought. On that principle I mean to act to-night. I am in the unfortunate condition of not being able to vote either for the Amendment or for the original Motion. I agree with the statement of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, the hon. Member for the University of Glasgow, in the statement he has made that it is impossible that the votes of Members of this House may be considered, and legitimately considered, as evidence with regard to the opinions of those who sent them here; and if I cannot follow the Amendment of my hon. Friend behind me the Member for West Perthshire (Sir Donald Currie), it is because it appears to deny that an expression of opinion conveyed through that medium can ever be an authentic expression of opinion. The Amendment of my hon. Friend says—

> "This House declines to entertain a proposal for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Scottish Church until the wishes of the people of Scotland shall have been ascertained."

I think that Amendment is open to the reply on the part of the Friends of the Motion that this is exactly one of those occasions, and exactly one of the means, by which some evidence may be given as to the opinion of the people of Scotland. Therefore, I am afraid I cannot support the Amendment of my hon. Friend. With regard to the original Motion, I must adhere strictly to what I said at the General Election. I admit that my hon. Friend the Mover of it (Dr. Cameron) did everything he could to cast his net wide on this occasion, and to diminish any difficulties weaker brethren might feel in following him into the Lobby; because he assured us, in the opening sentences of his speech, that the mere voting for the Motion would involve no pledge or engagement whatever with regard to circumstances or time. For example, if that were the case, a man might vote consistently for this proposal now in the 19th century, and yet with perfect consistency might express the opinion that the 20th century may be the best time for Disestablishment in Scotland. But, as far as I am concerned, even were I in an unofficial position, and undoubtedly, as I stand for the moment in an official position, the question I should be bound to ask myself—a question I have no alternative but to ask myself—would be, what will be the practical effect, what will be the impression, what will be the just and legitimate interpretation, of a vote given for the Motion of my hon. Friend by me on this occasion. It would be an engagement on my part to set about disestablishing the Church of Scotland. It would be for me—I do not attempt to lay down rules for others of which they are the best judges themselves—but for me I feel it would be a departure from the engagement into which I have already entered, and which was entered into so long ago by my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale, and accepted by myself, that I would stand aside from this question and leave opinion to ripen and declare itself among those who are so perfectly competent to deal with it, and more competent to deal with it, in my opinion, than me. I have not the least hesitation in saying that it is the opinion of the people of Scotland that ought to determine the existence of the Church of Scotland. I acknowledge fully what has been said by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. J. A. Campbell) of the very strong manifestation of opinion which has taken place among my own constituents, especially in the landward or country parishes in the county of Mid Lothian, showing that there are large bodies of opinion at this day favourable to the continued existence of the Church of Scotland. I have no fear of their progress on this question in the manner their legitimate convictions may indicate to them; but, for myself, it is plain I have nothing to do but to avoid taking a step which would involve a substantial departure from the opinion expressed by me at the General Election—that this was not a question upon which mainly judgment was to be taken by the constituencies from the candidates. And, above all, I ought to avoid giving a promise to act in this manner, which promise I have no intention, even if I had the power, of taking up.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister having addressed the House, I presume it is the desire of hon. Members that the debate should be brought to a close. I wish, however, to say a few words, both in regard to the general scope of the discussion and also in regard to the remarks which have been been made by the right hon. Gentleman. I think that everyone who has listened to the debate must have come to the conclusion that it has been a debate which has hardly come up to the importance of the subject, though, in saying that, I say nothing against the ability which has been shown by the speakers who have addressed the House. I should be ungrateful indeed if I did not express the pleasure I had in listening to the maiden speech of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson), if he will allow me to call him my hon. Friend, seeing that he is a brother barrister. I should be extremely ungrateful, after hearing the speech of my hon. and learned Friend, if I were to imply that the speeches in the course of the debate have not been able and excellent; but what I desire to say—and I imagine most hon. Members on both sides of the House will agree with me—is that the debate has hardly come up to the dignity and importance of the subject. That, Sir, is no aspersion, because I think everyone will agree with me in that opinion. I think that even the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) will agree with me that this Motion of his was not intended as a real movement in the battle, but is rather in the nature of a reconnaissance in force for the purpose of keeping his troops in good heart and spirit. The whole tone of the debate has taken a form of unreality, and therefore I think the House will concur with me that it can lead to very little practical good indeed. If I may take the liberty of saying so, I think that the last speech which was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister has not contributed anything at all to raise the tone of the debate. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of the question as being an ecclesiastical one, and one on the merits of which the people of Scotland are well able to judge, and are already well informed. But I think there can be no question whatever that this is not merely an ecclesiastical question, and that the people of Scotland, and the people of England also, would have been glad to hear what the Prime Minister's views are on the question of the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, which, in the minds of a great number of the Members of this House, is nothing less than a stepping stone to the Disestablishment of the Church of England. The people of Scotland want an answer to that question—aye or no. It is not, therefore, an essentially ecclesiastical or a purely ecclesiastical question; but what we want to know is whether we are to be called upon to proceed further than we have proceeded already in abandoning the principle which the country has held for a long time, and the great mass of the people hold still, I believe, that the union of Church and State shall be upheld for the welfare of the nation and its own good? We maintain that there are strong grounds for resisting the severance of the union between Church and State; and the Prime Minister admits that it would require exceptional grounds, although he says there were exceptional grounds in the case of Ireland, to induce him to depart from the principle of the Union. That being so, I would venture to ask the House whether the Prime Minister, and those who sit with him on the Front Bench, are entitled to escape from giving instruction to the public mind on this matter, on the mere ground that the Scotch people are well educated and able to judge for themselves? I do not think the people of Scotland are as yet quite as well educated upon the matter as that; and I am certain that the Liberals, who form so large a majority in that country, are not quite so well educated on subjects of great national importance which come before this House, that they do not require to receive some instruction and help from the right hon. Gentleman. But it is not merely a question of instructing and educating the mind of the mass of the people of Scotland that is involved in what has been mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for the University of Glasgow (Mr. J. A. Campbell). It is rather this—that if the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues are satisfied that this question is causing a great dispeace and disturbance of the public mind in Scotland, the House is entitled to expect from them that they will do something, by their utterances, either to allay that controversy, or state some means by which they propose to bring that disturbance to an end. It is not—and I believe I am expressing the opinion of the House—it is not the general course for statesmen to give no guidance or leading to the public mind on great public questions. It is an unusual thing, and a novel thing in the history of this country, or indeed in the history of any civilized State, for statesman after statesman, when asked to give an opinion of their own on a great public question by a constituency for which they are standing, to declare that they have no opinion whatever, and do not mean to form an intelligent opinion for themselves, but consider their whole duty to be to stand by like an executioner with his axe, waiting until the *sans culottes* of an ecclesiastical *salut public* shall bring them their victim. It is quite new in the history of this country that this should be so. Can the Prime Minister recall any occasion on which, on a great question like this, primarily concerning the fundamental principles of the Constitution of the country and the union between Church and State, the Prime Minister and those with whom he is associated, one after the other, refuse to give the slightest aid to public opinion, either for the purpose of bringing the controversy to an end, or having that controversy placed on a sound and just basis? Therefore we are placed in this position—that we receive no guidance at all from those who ought to direct public opinion in this House and in the country. From the Government we get no guidance whatever as to what their views and intentions are. And when the right hon. Gentleman says that the Motion of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) may be held to have no effect during the whole of the present century, he might have remembered that not long ago, when we were led to entertain views that a very long vista was ahead which might run to the end of the century, he was led to say that that long vista would close with the end of the existing Parliament. It may be a similar vista now, capable of being shortened by the shutting up of the telescope. There is only one other matter which I should like to allude to, because it is one of the things upon which we have received instruction from a right hon. Gentleman who, until a day or two ago, sat on the Front Bench opposite (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain). In a speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman at Inverness, after expressing himself in favour of Disestablishment, he held out as one of the bribes to the inhabitants of Scotland for the purpose of inducing them to support Disestablishment that when the Church was disestablished the money which would be set free could be devoted to the purposes of education. I think the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow expressed himself to-night much in the same way as to the manner in which the Church funds would be diverted from the purposes for which they were originally intended. They were originally devoted to the purposes of religion, and they are now employed for the advancement of that religion which is professed by those who are endeavouring to disestablish the Church, and we are asked no longer to consent to the funds being applied to religion. As to the morality of the proposal I will say nothing; but I will say that if the money is to be devoted to the purposes of education from which religion is to be excluded, I am sure that I express the opinion of the vast majority of my countrymen and countrywomen, to whatever Party in politics they may attach themselves, when I say that any proposal to remove religious instruction from our schools would be received by them with detestation and abhorrence. This, which is in accordance with the strictest logic, would necessarily follow—that if the money belonging to the Church was no longer to be devoted to religion, but to be devoted to the purposes of education, the first step would be taken towards driving religion from the schools altogether. There is one point on which I think those who sit on these Benches will concur with the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and it is that we must vote both against the Resolution and the Amendment. As that is rather a complicated process to work out, I suppose we had better follow the instructions given to us by the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day, by voting in the first place on the Question "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question" against the Amendment; and, when the Main Question is put, voting against that also. By taking that course we shall express our opinion most emphatically that the Church of Scotland has done nothing to justify her being deprived of that which she has held so long, and that no grounds have been shown why the old-established constitution of the Church and State in Scotland should be destroyed. It is the last argument which should be used in this House for destroying the union between Church and State that those who at present support the union hold the same doctrine and the same teaching as those who wish to bring about the severance. I say, Sir, that that is the last argument which should be used. It may be that there are difficulties in the way of an effective union between the Established and the Presbyterian Churches, and those difficulties have been already noticed to-night; but the two Churches which have come together to destroy the Church of Scotland have not yet succeeded in uniting themselves together, and I am quite certain that, however sincere the supporters of Disestablishment may be in hoping to produce peace by the destructive action upon which they are entering, if ever they do succeed in disestablishing the Church, instead of bringing about peace they will produce the impossibility of union, and instead of effecting that which they profess to desire they will really stir up feelings of bitterness and animosity which are now gradually soothing down and becoming softer and kindlier. I do hope that the day is far distant when so vague and general a Resolution as that which has been moved by the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow will ever receive the support of the Government in this House; and I venture to predict that if Her Majesty's Ministers wait until the people of Scotland really express an opinion in favour of doing anything of the kind proposed, no such measure will ever be brought in by any responsible Government at all.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question put.

The House *divided* :—Ayes 125 ; Noes 237 : Majority 112.

AYES.

Abraham, W. (Glam.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Allen, W. S.
Arch, J.
Armitage, B.
Asher, A.
Ashton, T. G.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Barbour, W. B.
Beaumont, H. F.
Beith, G.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Blades, J. H.
Blake, T.
Bolton, T. H.
Borlase, W. C.
Bradlaugh, C.
Bright, W. L.
Brocklehurst, W. C.
Brown, A. H.
Bruce, hon. R. P.
Brunner, J. T.
Bryce, J.
Buchanan, T. R.
Buckley, A.
Buxton, E. N.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Chamberlain, rt. hn. J.
Chamberlain, R.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Cobb, H. P.
Cobbold, F. T.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Colman, J. J.
Conybeare, C. A. V.
Cook, E. R.
Cook, W.
Corbett, A. C.
Cossham, H.
Cowen, J.
Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Craven, J.
Cremer, W. R.
Crossley, E.
Crossman, General Sir W.
Davies, R.
Davies, W.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Ellis, J. E.
Esslemont, P.
Everett, R. L.
Finlayson, J.
Fry, T.
Gaskell, C. G. Milnes-
Goldsmid, Sir J.
Gourley, E. T.
Grey, Sir E.
Haldane, R. B.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Henry, M.
Holden, A.
Holden, I.
Hoyle, I.

Illingworth, A.
Ingram, W. J.
James, C. H.
Jenkins, Sir J. J.
Johns, J. W.
Johnson-Ferguson, J. E.
Jones-Parry, L.
Kenrick, W.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Leahy, J.
Leatham, E. A.
Lyell, L.
M'Arthur, A.
M'Culloch, J.
Mason, S.
Mather, W.
Morgan, O. V.
Morley, A.
Noel, E.
Otter, F.
Paget, T. T.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Picton, J. A.
Powell, W. R. H.
Price, T. P.
Priestley, B.
Pugh, D.
Ramsay, J.
Rathbone, W.
Rendel, S.
Richard, H.
Roberts, J.
Roberts, J. B.
Robson, W. S.
Roe, T.
Russell, E. R.
Salis-Schwabe, Col. G.
Saunders, W.
Sellar, A. C.
Shaw, T.
Sheridan, H. B.
Shirley, W. S.
Spicer, H.
Stevenson, F. S.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Thomas, A.
Trevelyan, rt.hon.G.O.
Verney, Captain E. H.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Warmington, C. M.
Wayman, T.
Westlake, J.
Will, J. S.
Williams, A. J.
Williams, J. C.
Wilson, H. J.
Wilson, J. (Durham)
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.
Wright, C.
Yeo, F. A.

TELLERS.

Cameron, C.
Hunter, W. A.

NOES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Allen, H. G.
Allsopp, hon. C.
Allsopp, hon. G.
Ambrose, W.
Anstruther, Sir R.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baden-Powell, G. S.
Baggallay, E.
Baily, L. R.
Baird, J.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Balfour, G. W.
Bartley, G. C. T.
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, right hon. Sir M. E. Hicks-
Beach, W. W. B.
Beadel, W. J.
Bective, Earl of
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C. W. De la Poer
Bethell, Commander
Bickersteth, R.
Bigwood, J.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Blaine, R. S.
Blundell, Col. H. B. H.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bridgeman, Col. hon. F. C.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, Col. A. M.
Brooks, Sir W. C.
Burghley, Lord
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, J. A.
Cavendish, Lord E.
Chaplin, right hon. H.
Charrington, S.
Churchill, rt. hn. Lord R. H. S.
Clarke, E.
Coddington, W.
Cohen, L. L.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Compton, F.
Cooke, C. W. R.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, rt. hon. Sir R. A.
Cross, H. S.
Cubitt, right hon. G.
Curzon, Viscount
Dawnay, Colonel hon. L. P.
Dawson, R.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
Denison, E. W.
Denison, W. B.
Dimsdale, Baron R.

Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Douglas, A. Akers-
Duckham, T.
Duncan, Colonel F.
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, rt. hn. Sir W. H.
Eaton, H. W.
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, hn. A. J. F.
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Ellis, Sir J. W.
Evelyn, W. J.
Ewing, Sir A. O.
Farquharson, H. R.
Feilden, Lt.-Gen. R. J.
Fellowes, W. H.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Finch, G. H.
Finlay, R. B.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitz-Wygram, Sir F.
Folkestone, Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Gardner, R. Richardson-
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. J. S.
Gibb, T. E.
Gibson, J. G.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Green, Sir E.
Gregory, G. B.
Grenfell, W. H.
Grey, A.
Grimston, Viscount
Gunter, Colonel R.
Hall, A. W.
Hall, C.
Halsey, T. F.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord C. J.
Hamilton, Lord F. S.
Hamilton, Col. C. E.
Hamley, Gen. Sir E. B
Hanbury, R. W.
Hankey, F. A.
Hardcastle, E.
Hardcastle, F.
Heaton, J. H.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hervey, Lord F.
Hickman, A.
Hill, Lord A. W.
Hill, A. S.
Holland, rt. hon. Sir H. T.
Holmes, rt. hon. H.
Hope, right hon. A. J. B. B.
Houldsworth, W. H.
Howard, E. S.
Howard, J.

Howard, J. M.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hughes-Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir G.
Hutton, J. F.
Isaacs, L. H.
Jackson, W. L.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Jennings, L. J.
Johnston, W.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
Kenyon, hon. G. T.
Kimber, H.
King, H. S.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, hon. H. T.
Lawrance, J. C.
Lawrence, Sir T.
Lawrence, W. F.
Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
Leighton, S.
Lewisham, Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Lloyd, W.
Long, W. H.
Lowther, hon. W.
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, rt. hon. J. H. A.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclean, J. M.
Macnaghten, E.
M'Calmont, Captain J.
M'Iver, L.
M'Lagan, P.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Manners, rt. hon. Lord J. J. R.
March, Earl of
Marjoribanks, rt. hon. E.
Marriott, rt. hn. W. T.
Marton, Maj. G. B. H.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mildmay, F. B.
Mills, hon. C. W.
Milvain, T.
Morgan, hon. F.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, rt. hon. Sir J. R.
Mulholland, H. L.
Muncaster, Lord
Muntz, P. A.
Murdoch, C. T.
Newark, Viscount
Norris, E. S.
Northcote, hon. H. S.
Norton, R.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Pearce, W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Percy, Lord A. M.
Plunket, rt. hon. D. R.
Pomfret, W. P.
Powell, F. S.
Price, Captain G. E.
Puleston, J. H.
Ritchie, C. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robinson, T.
Ross, A. H.
Round, J.
Russell, Sir G.
Sandys, Lieut-Col. T. M.
Saunderson, Maj. E. J.
Sclater-Booth, rt. hn. G.
Seely, C.
Selwin-Ibbetson, rt. hon. Sir H. J.
Seton-Karr, H.
Sidebottom, T. H.
Sidebottom, W.
Sitwell, Sir G. R.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Smith, D.
Stafford, Marquess of
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, rt. hn. Col. Sir F.
Stanley, E. J.
Stewart, M.
Sturrock, P.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, J. G.
Tipping, W.
Tollemache, H. J.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Tottenham, A. L.
Trotter, H. J.
Tyler, Sir H. W.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Walrond, Col. W. H.
Watkin, Sir E. W.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir. R. E.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Winn, hon. R.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wroughton, P.
Yorke, J. R.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.
Currie, Sir D.
Robertson, E.

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Wednesday, 31*st March*, 1886.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—

Consolidated Fund (No. 2) [49 *Vict.* c. 7].

Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order [49 *Vict.* c. i.].

Highgate and Kilburn Open Spaces [49 *Vict.* c. ii.].

House adjourned at half past Twelve o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 31*st March*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Select Committee — *Report* — Commons [No. 98].

Public Bills — *Resolution in Committee* — *Ordered*—*First Reading*—Religious Prosecutions Abolition * [160].

Ordered—*First Reading* — School Board Elections (Scotland) * [159].

Second Reading — Police Forces Enfranchisement [3]; Allotments and Small Holdings [53], *debate adjourned.*

Withdrawn — Quarter Sessions (Boroughs) [37].

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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POLICE FORCES ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—[Bill 3.]

(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord Claud Hamilton, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Mr. Cowen, Sir George Russell.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that the Bill had been some time before the country, and he hoped he might say there was a considerable consensus of opinion in its favour. The recent Reform Act enfranchised all capable citizens who paid rates and taxes; it even enfranchised many who lived in houses, but did not pay rates and taxes directly. Yet it most unfairly left out a large class of as capable citizens as there were in this country, who had shown by their conduct that they were as fit to be intrusted with the privilege of voting as any other citizens. An attempt was made to remove the grievance of the police at the time of the passing of the Franchise Bill in 1884. A clause was moved for the purpose; but the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) took exception to the introduction of it, though not on the merits of the clause itself, and after a discussion it was withdrawn. In 1885 Mr. Coleridge Kennard, then Member for Salisbury, introduced a measure on the subject, which received the support of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer and of the then Home Secretary the right hon. Member for a division of Lancashire. The second reading was carried without a division, but it was too late in the Session to make any further progress with the Bill. He hoped, however, that the early period at which he had been able to bring on the Bill this Session was a favourable augury of the ultimate success that would attend it. It was said that the opinions of the Force were not unanimously in favour of the Bill. Some chief constables, including those of Macclesfield and Herefordshire, had strongly opposed the extension of the franchise to the police. But an organ which was supposed to express the opinions of the Police Force of the country showed that a vast number of equally competent chief constables had taken an entirely opposite view. They had represented, with a great amount of force and reason, that the police were quite as well qualified to vote as were soldiers, who enjoyed the franchise, and as Revenue officers and Post Office officials. They said that the police regarded it as a slur and as a mark of incapacity that they should be deprived of a privilege which had been given to almost everybody else. The hon. Member for Central Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent) in February last received a deputation to congratulate him upon his return. This deputation spoke on behalf of 151 chief constables of counties or boroughs representing over 10,000 men, and the deputation expressed their confidence that one effect of his return would be an additional guarantee that the grievances of the police, of which disfranchisement was one, would speedily be removed. The hon. Member in his reply said he regarded this as one of the grievances from which the police suffered, and he congratulated them on their unanimity in desiring its removal. This question had already been tested with perfect success in Scotland. The police in 32 counties and in a certain number of the burghs of Scotland created under the Lindsay Act in 1862 were in the same position as their brother constables in England, and were not possessed of the vote; but all cities and Royal burghs in Scotland had ever had the vote for their constables, and they had exercised that vote for many years without the least hitch or hindrance, with perfect advantage to the police as a force, and with no injury or detriment to the general public. Chief Constable M'Call, of Glasgow, who was in command of 1,083 men, said that he entirely agreed with the Chief Constable of Dundee, who had 163 men under him, that he never heard that the voting of the Police Force had been injurious to the Public Service, and that he thought they had always exercised the vote without prejudice to the public interests or their own. This was confirmed by the Chief Constable of Edinburgh, Captain Henderson, who commanded 429 men, and said that he knew no body of men who were more likely to use the privilege with judgment and discretion and for the good of the country. He had been told by one or two chief constables that what was now proposed would be likely to interfere with discipline. But if we could trust our soldiers with the vote, why not trust the police? He thought he was justified in saying that it was time that the disqualification should be removed, and the same privilege which had been conferred upon other classes should be extended to the police. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. JOSEPH COWEN (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in seconding the Motion, said, that after the complete and lucid statement of his right hon. Friend there was little left for him to add. The police laboured under unwarrantable disabilities. We gave our soldiers liberty to vote and refused it to the police, although the man who once became a soldier could never divest himself of his military character, whereas a policeman, when off duty, was essentially a citizen. We also gave votes to postmen, as well as to Civil servants and Excise officers. There was no other class in the community, indeed, that was disqualified from exercising political power except the police. And there was really no justification for the exclusion. The police in Scotland had it, and the police in the Colonies and other countries—where they had more onerous duties to perform than they had here—also possessed it, and in no instance did they use it adversely to the State. The late Home Secretary was in favour of the principle of the Bill, so was his Predecessor; and he hoped the present holder of the Office would be a supporter also. There was no body of men in the country to whom Englishmen were more indebted for their security and liberty than to the policemen. They were an ever-present but an almost invisible force for good in our social system. To deprive such men of the primary rights of citizenship which they did so much to protect was a glaring injustice and anomaly. There might have been some justification for withholding this power from them in former times. The right to vote might then possibly have been an injury to the policemen themselves, as when votes were given openly it would have been possible for members of the Watch Committees in boroughs and magistrates in counties to ascertain how the men had voted, and they might have been punished for their political opinions. But that was impossible now. They could exercise their power without supervision or without the chance of injury; and he trusted that the House would unanimously pass a Bill which only sought to do a tardy act of justice to a deserving body of public servants.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.*)

Sir HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire) said, that as he took a somewhat conspicuous part in the last Parliament in opposition to a similar proposal, he hoped the House would allow him to state the course which he intended to take in reference to this Bill. His hon. Friend who had last spoken had said that they had enfranchised the soldier, therefore they ought to enfranchise the police. The fact was soldiers never were disfranchised, but had always had the right to vote; whereas the police had been disfranchised from the very time of their creation as a force under the Municipal Act of 1835, and every other Act under which bodies of constabulary had been formed. Under these Acts not only were the police rendered incapable of voting, but they were not allowed to affect the vote of any other person; and the reason for this provision—which might at first sight appear strange—was that the Legislature intended that the policemen who had to appear at political meetings, and whose duty it was to keep the peace between the political parties, should be perfectly independent, and never regarded as a political partizan. It was considered desirable that the police should be removed from even the suspicion of showing favour to political allies and disfavour to political opponents. Therefore, the analogy which his hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle relied on was not well founded. Soldiers had never interfered at elections; they were not present at political meetings to keep the peace, and they did not appear in public while elections were being held. It was therefore immaterial whether they were political partizans or not. In the case of policemen, however, it had been thought, at least in past times, that they should be removed from all suspicion of being partizans. It was under circumstances of this kind, in consequence of legislation by the Government of Sir Robert Peel, passed with the full and unanimous occurrence of both political Parties, that this matter was raised in 1835. In the last Parliament, when the Franchise Bill was before the House, and Mr. Coleridge Kennard moved an Amendment with a view to conferring the franchise on the police, he stated his reasons for opposing it. What had taken place on that occasion was impressed upon his memory by the fact that he had received support from an unexpected quarter. Mr. Warton sprung up, and said that the happiest day of his life had been reached because he found himself able to agree with every word the Attorney General had said. Mr. Kennard withdrew his Amendment, and so the matter rested until 1885, when the question was again mooted and an attempt was made to reverse the previous decision. What he asked for then, being at the time in Opposition, was that an opportunity should be afforded the House to reflect upon the question. He was glad he had done so, for the subject was now approached with fuller information. The matter had been discussed at the General Election, and he had to confess that he believed there were a majority of Members within the House, and a consensus of opinion outside, in favour of giving the vote to the police. It had not been unreasonable to entertain the opinion he had formerly held; and he still thought that if they looked at the matter in an abstract light, the weight of authority would be against the proposal; but they had to deal with it as a practical question, and he thought it would be inadvisable to have it made a subject of discussion at future elections and a burning question. Therefore, though he did not go back from the opinion he had previously expressed, now that the question had been brought into the position which it occupied, he would not be disposed to oppose the second reading of the Bill. There were a few more subjects he wished to refer to. A question arose whether they were going to make the policeman a whole citizen. They retained by the Bill the disqualification of the policeman with regard to his appearing at any public meeting when off duty, and therefore with regard to his standing on the platform and expressing his political views. Neither must he attempt to persuade a voter or to canvass any man. Therefore, they had to consider whether they would leave the policeman in this peculiar position, or give him the full rights of citizenship. There was one other matter. They were not by this Bill conferring the municipal franchise on the policeman, and therefore were not trusting him with the full duties of citizenship. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to admit that he was afraid to give to policemen the municipal franchise lest they should come into contact with the Watch Committees of boroughs. The House would have to consider whether this disqualification ought to prevail. An enormous power was given to the heads of the Police Force. At county elections especially they had the sole control of the force, and men could be removed out of their own polling district into another if their political views were opposed to those of their superior officers. He was not going to suggest that the heads of the police would act intentionally in that way; on the contrary, he believed they would act with strict impartiality; but they would have to give orders which would create a suspicion against them and which would at the same time disfranchise the police. All this showed that the subject was not quite so narrow as some had supposed it to be. As, however, the objections he had urged would probably not be deemed sufficient to justify the rejection of the Bill, he would cheerfully consent to the second reading, reserving to himself the right of again raising his objections in Committee.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I rise in support of the second reading of the Bill which has been moved by my right hon. Friend the Member for Essex (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson). It is, as he has said, no Party measure. It may, I hope, receive the unanimous assent of the House. There is no one who has a greater knowledge of the Police Service than the right hon. Baronet. It was a matter of general regret when he resigned the Under Secretaryship of State at the Home Office, which brought him for many years into close contact with the police of the whole country. That which he now seeks at the hands of Parliament on behalf of the Army of Order in England and Wales is an act of simple justice, and one which he knows well, and I know, will not be abused. With the recent extension of the franchise it is, I submit, impossible longer to deprive 34,000 of the most intelligent men in the whole country of the Parliamentary vote. Hon. Members on this side of the House have nothing assuredly to fear from the extension of the franchise among the educated, the discerning, the far-seeing, and the intelligent. Have hon. Members opposite any scruple upon this head? It may be that in the course of the debate doubts may be thrown upon the wisdom of this step from a disciplinary or a social point of view. They are, however, I submit, devoid of solid foundation. Can it be doubted that political feeling is constantly—and I, for one, say unfortunately—imported into elections for the school boards and for guardians of the poor? The police have long had a voice in the election of persons to seats on these bodies. But there is no hon. Member who will aver that the privilege has been in any way unduly exercised. No hon. Member can, I am sure, cite one single instance in which the public interest has been in the slightest degree prejudiced thereby. I go further. The police in Scotch boroughs number 2,317 men. They have long enjoyed the Parliamentary franchise, and I shall be much surprised if there is any hon. Member for a Scotch borough who will rise in his place and say that the privilege has been improperly exercised by the Scotch police, or who will say that the public interest in Scotland has been prejudicially affected. I hold in my hand letters from 24 chief constables of Scotland, whose uniform experience is that no evil consequences whatever have ensued, either to the public or to the police themselves, and they one and all claim its extension to their English brethren. The Chief Constable of Edinburgh writes—

> "I have never heard that the possession of the franchise has been attended with any unsatisfactory results."

The Chief Constable of Glasgow, Mr. M'Call, one of the ablest officers in the Kingdom, says—

> "The men have always exercised their voting powers without prejudice either to the public interest or their own."

The Chief Constable of Aberdeen declares that the police have enjoyed and exercised both the Parliamentary and municipal franchise for many years without any unsatisfactory result. This, I submit to the House, is overwhelming evidence that no evil result is likely to follow the enactment of the measure proposed by my right hon. Friend. He has excluded—and wisely, in my humble opinion—the municipal franchise. It is, I freely admit, open to question whether advantage is to be gained by the police joining in the election of the Municipal Councillors, by whom they are to be controlled, who are often the arbiters of punishment, reward, and pension. It is true that no great inconvenience is found in this system in Scotland; but, none the less, I think the right hon. Baronet has wisely excluded the municipal franchise from this measure. His opinion wholly coincides with that of a representation I recently had the honour to receive from 150 chief and head constables in England and Wales. They were not in favour of the police receiving the municipal franchise; but they one and all placed reliance upon the justice of Parliament to allow to those who did such good work for the country at least a silent voice in the choice of those by whom its affairs of Empire are administered. No one, Sir, would advocate or in the remotest degree recommend that the police should take any active part in electioneering, or that they should be strong partizans. But on behalf of those with whom I stood shoulder to shoulder for many years, on behalf of those whose comradeship any man might with reason be proud, I beg leave to join my right hon. Friend in seeking this act of justice at the hands of Parliament. I beg to support the second reading of the Bill, which will secure for the police of England and Wales the privileges enjoyed by police beyond the Tweed, privileges from which neither the soldier nor the sailor are debarred, privileges—nay, Sir, the rights in this age of education, of intelligence, of honesty, of uprightness, such as are exhibited every day and every hour of the day by the guardians of public safety in this country.

Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) said, that one of the reasons why he complained of the last Reform Bill was that it did not accomplish the object aimed at in this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to amend the Franchise Act by including within its operation 34,000 policemen; but it should be remembered that there were still 3,326,000 men in the country, most of whom, he believed, paid their fair share of taxes, who were not enfranchised. As far as the police were concerned, he had never been able to understand why they were excluded from the franchise. It had been considered that law-abiding people, who were otherwise qualified, ought to have a Parliamentary vote, and if there was a body of men more law-abiding than any other it was the police. He hailed with satisfaction the fact that this measure came from a Conservative Member. Time was when every extension of the franchise was bitterly opposed by hon. Gentlemen who sat opposite; but the Conservative Members were, it seemed, anxious to do tardy justice to even a small class of people. He hoped the time would come when Parliament would extend to all intelligent men who lived in houses, whether as occupiers, lodgers, or *employés*, the right of voting for Members of Parliament. He heartily approved of this piece of Conservative liberality, and trusted that hereafter those hon. Members opposite would bear in mind their own act when it was sought to extend the franchise still further.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) said, the House should not, in considering this subject, overlook the important difference that existed as between the constitution of the police in England and Scotland and that of Ireland. In the former cases the police were a local force, who were not liable to be sent outside the county to which they properly belonged. But in Ireland the contrary was the fact. The Constabulary there were liable to be removed from one end of the Island to the other; and he might add that the force was always a Tory force, so far as the officers were concerned. Officers could, if they chose, send 200 or 300 men to reside in any constituency they chose, and thereby succeed, it might be, in turning the scale against the Government then in Office. This circumstance, taken in conjunction with a proposal to reduce the qualifying period of residence for a voter from 12 months to one month, opened up a dangerous prospect in Ireland. There was nothing, indeed, to prevent the practical disfranchisement of men by transferring them from one division of a county to another to suit the exigencies of the occasion. He would, under all the circumstances, and having regard to the peculiar constitution and mode of administration of the force in Ireland, give his most strenuous opposition to this Bill as far as its extension to Ireland was concerned, and he hoped that an assurance would be given that this extension was not to be persevered in.

Mr. J. WILSON (Edinburgh, Central) said, he desired to bear his testimony regarding the operation of police enfranchisement in Scotland. There the police had all along enjoyed the franchise, both municipal and Parliamentary, and until he became a Member of this House he did not know that the police of England were denied it. In this they had another little illustration that, in some respects, England was behind Scotland. He said so because he was prepared to state, and to state emphatically, that police officers in Scotland had never to his knowledge shown themselves unworthy of using this qualification. On the contrary, they had invariably brought to bear on election business the ordinary intelligence and good sense of citizens. No doubt, during his candidature, he had been asked whether he would look favourably on the Bill to create retiring allowances for the police; but he could excuse that, because all hon. Members knew that in Parliamentary contests every class in the community spoke up for their own interests; and if they were to disqualify any class because they spoke out on subjects which specially affected them he was inclined to think that they would have to cut off two-thirds or three-fourths of the whole electorate of the country. In Scotland it had not been found that police enfranchisement had worked in the least degree unsatisfactorily. The police had not interfered with their meetings, nor had they shown Party bias; and he held that on this point their experience in Scotland was a proof of the adage, that "one ounce of fact was worth a pound of fancy." Considerable numbers of the Scotch police were drafted into England, and it was an anomaly that that which was regarded as a compliment and a preferment should be accompanied by a degradation in the loss of the vote. He did not believe that the police in England would be less intelligent or less patriotic in the exercise of the franchise than their brethren in Scotland, and he appealed to the House most heartily and cheerfully to agree to the second reading of this Bill.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.) said, it might be convenient if he stated at once the intentions of the Government. He should endeavour to separate the Bill altogether from considerations which had been urged on both sides with reference to the possibility of some amendment of the General Law under which a residence of a month would give a qualification for the Parliamentary franchise. When that proposal came on the Government would know how to deal with it; but it need not be mixed up with the present discussion. He regarded the Bill as one not to enfranchise a certain class of the constituency, but to remove a penalty now imposed on policemen for voting. A policeman had as much right, *primâ facie*, to vote as any other citizen, but he was debarred by certain Statutes from voting through the fear of the heavy penalty which he would have to pay if he did vote. He believed it was once ascertained in a trial that 20 policemen had voted, and a question arose as to who paid the fines. The question was whether we should retain a special disqualification for a particular class of persons in a certain employment, or whether they should be put upon the same footing as all others. He was bound to say that for a long time past—certainly since the passing of the Ballot Act—he had been strongly opposed to these special exemptions, which in other cases had been removed years ago. Mainly by the efforts of Mr. Monk, the disqualification of Revenue officers was removed, and in large numbers they were admitted to the franchise. He was not aware that any harm had resulted; and, although they could approach Parliament with respect to their emoluments, speaking generally, they had shown themselves to be as capable and as reasonable as any other class of citizens. In these circumstances, and holding strongly that any exclusion on the ground of the office one might hold was bad in itself, and ought to be maintained only on the clearest proof that the exclusion was necessary, he could not vote against the Bill; but, on the contrary, he should cordially support it. In saying this he was only repeating what was said in the last Parliament upon a similar Bill by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. If other classes of persons were left out, unless there was some special reason for their exclusion, their case ought to be considered; and, no doubt, in Committee any necessary amendment would be entertained. Police magistrates were given the franchise by an Act passed in 1874. As to the disciplinary question, he did not think there would be more difficulty in dealing with the police than there had been in dealing with the Revenue officers and with soldiers. For a very long time every soldier or sailor who had a qualification had been always allowed to vote, and to go to the poll wherever the polling place might be situated, without asking his superior officer. All he had to do was to intimate that it was his intention to go to the poll, and on giving that intimation he might go to wherever the place was to exercise the franchise, only under the reservation that the time he took for the purpose should be reasonable and proper. Other disqualifications having been removed, he could not conceive there was any reason for maintaining that of the police, and he should, therefore, vote for the Bill.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) said, he hoped the House would read the Bill a second time, for everything appeared to be in favour of it and nothing against it. A policeman certainly should have the same rights as a soldier or a sailor. It would be possible for the commanding officer of a ship to say that a man had misbehaved himself, and that he should not be allowed to go on shore and vote; but he did not think such a thing would be likely to occur, any more than he believed that a chief constable or superior officer would send men away just before an election so as to deprive them of their votes. We all owed a great deal to the police, no matter to what class we belonged, and it was very hard upon the police that they should have their votes taken away. We were indebted to them for our comfort and safety, and still they were disfranchised. Some years ago he was intimately connected with the police, once or twice, and, while he found that they had a very strict sense of discipline and duty, at the same time they displayed a great deal of kindness and courtesy. He did not think that the police would be unfair partizans in any way whatever, no matter what their political feelings might be. If they were to show any partiality or committed themselves in any way, of course they could be punished as others were for similar offences.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) said, he regretted that his right hon. Friend (Mr. Childers) had not given an assurance that an Amendment would be proposed which would have the effect of causing this measure not to be extended to Ireland. It had been stated during the debate that it was all imagination to say that the police would act against the interests of the people. There might be no such fear in England or Scotland; but in Ireland the contrary was the case. Last year, when the Registration Bill was being discussed, objection was taken to placing University students on the Register, because they were *in statu pupillari.* It was argued on that occasion that, as they performed none of the ordinary duties of citizenship, they were not entitled to exercise the franchise. That argument applied with even greater force to the Royal Irish Constabulary, who were known to be greatly under the influence of their officers, and to have attacked the people with alacrity and pleasure whenever they had been ordered to do so. They were known to be out of sympathy with the people, and if they were so ready to assault them on all occasions, of course they would be ready to perform the much easier duty of voting as their officers told them. They were at present a military force, and so long as they remained a military force, thoroughly imbued with all the hostile feelings of their officers, and inimical to the best interests of the people, it was the duty of the Irish Members to interpose their voice and to protest against the Constabulary being endowed with the franchise. The noble Lord (Lord Charles Beresford) said they all owed the police a great deal. In Ireland they owed the police nothing but the memory of hard knocks; and until the time had arrived when the people of Ireland would have control over the police of Ireland—until they had been reduced to the position of a civil force—the Irish Members must protest against their being endowed with the rights of freemen, which in their hands would enable them, at the bidding of their officers, to outvote the people in Ireland who represented the popular interests of the country.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said, he would remind the House that those Members who sat on the Front Opposition Bench had always been in favour of this principle. He was glad to find that there was no contention on the part of the House with regard to the principle of the Bill. If he might venture to address a word of advice to his right hon. Friend the Member for Essex (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) in charge of the Bill, he would say to him that, though they would not be prepared for an instant to admit that the dangers existed which Members for Irish constituencies appeared to apprehend, still, in the interest of the measure and its early passage through the House, it might perhaps be wise that the case of the Irish Police, which was certainly different in its constitution, should not be mixed up in this matter with the case of the Police of England and Wales. The Metropolitan Police was to some extent an Imperial Force like that of the Irish Police; but it had also to be remembered that the Secretary of State for the Home Department was responsible to the House of Commons for the control of that body, and could be closely questioned when anything occurred calling for examination and inquiry. He did not believe in the dangers which were feared regarding the possible removal of a police force from one part of the country to the other. This, however, was a risk which in all cases they must run in extending the franchise to this and similar bodies of public servants. The same power of removal might just as well be exercised at election times in a greater or less degree by cab proprietors and other employers of labour. It was a risk they must be prepared to take; but to all objections regarding a risk of that kind, to the infringement of discipline and the possible partiality of the Police Force, there was the absolute and conclusive answer afforded by the satisfactory experience gained in Scotch burghs. He hoped, therefore, the House would assent to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. FITZGERALD (Cambridge) said, he was heartily in favour of the Bill so far as it applied to the English and Welsh Police, and also to the Dublin Metropolitan Police. But with regard to the Royal Irish Constabulary, he confessed, that after what had fallen from the hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance), there was a great deal of weight in the objection which had been urged. He did not see in his place at present the Chief Secretary for Ireland, but if he had been he would have asked him whether the Bill would apply to the county police at all. His own opinion was that they would not come within scope of the measure, because the members of this force lived in barracks and not in houses, and were not ratepayers according to the law. If any Member of the Government present was acquainted with the Royal Irish Constabulary, perhaps he would give an opinion as to whether they came under the Bill.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) said, he had no abstract objection to a policeman having a vote. So far as the Irish Police were concerned he held that they were just as well entitled to exercise the franchise as any other class of the community, if they would fairly be allowed to do so. He had still less objection to the Metropolitan Police in Dublin being admitted to the benefit of the Bill. They lived in houses in many cases, and did not live in barracks, and he believed it would be a very hard thing to deprive such men of the franchise when they paid for their houses or lodgings. He thought the case of the Constabulary was very different indeed from that of the ordinary Police Force. He saw no objection to the men of the Royal Irish Constabulary having votes if they would be all allowed to record their votes. He saw not the smallest objection to the Bill if the officers and men of the force acted according to their opinions, and were allowed freely to exercise the franchise. He, for his part, believed that as good Irishmen were to be found amongst the Constabulary as amongst any other class in the community, and he certainly differed from those who believed they would all vote Tory. The House should, however, take into consideration the fact that in passing this Bill they would be only passing it for the benefit of the Tory section of the force. He believed that at elections only the men who would vote for the Government would be allowed to exercise the franchise, and the others would be appointed to such duties as would take them as far away from the polls as possible, so that the Nationalist constables would really never get to vote at all. As he had already said, so far as he was concerned, he had not the smallest objection to the Bill if the police could exercise the franchise freely. There was another point to which he wished to draw attention. While he thought it was very doubtful if many of the men would get a vote at all if this Bill passed, as there were so many requirements for them to fulfil that very few of them would really enjoy the franchise, he was bound to say that they had in Ireland very extraordinary decisions occasionally regarding election matters. Soldiers in Ireland had voted in circumstances which were not permissible in England and Scotland. In Kildare, at the last elections, they had whole platoons of soldiers sent up from the Curragh Camp to vote, and no one could stop them. He could quite conceive that if the period of residence were shortened that in tight constituencies like Derry, where the present Member only won the seat by a majority of 29, that the Government would be able to send down some time before the election a number of men to vote against the Nationalist candidate. In the Derry Election 20 soldiers voted at the last election, of course for the Tory, and against his hon. Friend the Member for North Longford, and it was thus that he was defeated in Derry. Let them fancy the author of *The History of Our Own Times* defeated by a regiment of soldiers in this way! This was the danger which he feared in military and police cases if the period of qualification were shortened. In Ulster constituencies, for example, the Government might be open to the suspicion of drafting policemen and soldiers into divisions of the Province with the object of swamping the real constituency. In order to avoid suspicion of any intention of this kind he believed that no risk or temptation should be either left in the hands of the Government or the landlord class; he believed it would be wise to exclude a movable force like the Constabulary from this Bill. At the same time, he wished again to say that he did not desire to cast the least slur upon the force as a body. He could not follow those who seemed of opinion that they would if they got their vote go against the people. He believed that as a body if they were allowed to exercise the franchise freely and untrammelled it would be exercised with prudence and fairness. When the police were under the control of the Local Authorities in Ireland the matter would be entirely different.

Major SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said, he believed that a great injustice would be inflicted on the Royal Constabulary if they were excluded and the other portions of the Police Force throughout the country were admitted to the franchise. He was not surprised that hon. Members from Ireland should feel a little sore on the subject of the Irish Constabulary. They had had a large experience of that force at various times, and probably they would have again.

He protested, however, against the assumption of hon. Members below the Gangway when they said that if a few constables were enfranchised by this Bill—and they would be very few—they would be absolutely under the direction of their superior officers as to how their votes should be recorded. Hon. Members from Ireland were so accustomed to the manipulation of the Irish electorate that they could not conceive a person in the position of an Irish constable giving a vote according to his conscience. His own experience of the Constabulary was that they were a very conscientious body of men. They were mostly Roman Catholic in their religious views, and were always law-abiding and loyal. He had no doubt that if they received a vote they would probably record it in favour of the candidate who wished to uphold the supremacy of the Crown and the maintenance of law and order. Hon. Members might think that was good reason for refusing them the vote; but, of course, he held a contrary opinion. One hon. Gentleman had said they would wait until they themselves got control of the police; but perhaps that day might never come. At a recent period it seemed probable it might; but he thought the matter had now receded into a dim future. However, he hoped the House would not consent to place a slur upon a most deserving and loyal body of men who had been always faithful in the maintenance of law and order in Ireland.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) said, it could not be pointed out too strongly by Members of the Nationalist Party that if they offered an objection to the Constabulary being included it was not by any means that they thought them incapable or unwilling to act as citizens. It was because the Constabulary were not an impartial force in Ireland—they had always been arrayed against the National Party—and if they had the vote it was well known they would be as partial as could be to one Party, and as hostile as could be to another. The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh naturally championed the Constabulary, because he represented the landlords for whose behalf the Constabulary existed. In the North of Ireland when an election occurred large numbers of Constabulary were sent up to support and look after and generally wet nurse the hon. and gallant Member and his brother magistrates who liked to have the police about at election times. Numbers of police were drafted up where the issues of the election were somewhat uncertain. In the constituency he represented the Nationalists and the Tories stood pretty equal on the Register, and loads of police were brought up. It was quite conceivable and possible that the landlords of that county, having control of the police, and being friendly and intimate with them, might draft up a hundred or two a month or so before the election, and so by the voice of those servants of the State turn the election and nullify the voice of the real inhabitants. That would be an altogether unfair thing; and it was upon those grounds alone—upon the ground that the Constabulary was not a civil but a military force—that the Irish Members objected. A number of the constables were better men than the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh, who tried to suggest that a slur was being cast upon them. He said in his jocose and rather idiotic style—[“Order!”]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not justified in applying such an expression to another hon. Mamber of this House, and I therefore call upon him at once to withdraw it.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I certainly withdraw it, and I am sorry I uttered it, because——

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must withdraw it unreservedly.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said, he would withdraw it unreservedly, and he was sorry he used the expression, because it was unnecessary to do so. He would only add that no Member of the National Body would for a moment think of casting a slur upon the Constabulary as a whole. Although some of them were bad enough, he believed the great bulk of them, if left to their own discretion, would vote fairly for the country. With regard to the Dublin Metropolitan Police he did not think anybody would object to their being included in the Bill.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, he was willing to admit there was some force in what had been stated with regard to the movable character of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and that that body was not in the same position as the Dublin Metropolitan Police, or any other force of ordinary local police. Therefore, he was willing to consider in Committee the withdrawal of the Royal Irish Constabulary from the operation of the Bill; but he thought it would be generally conceded that the Dublin Metropolitan Police should be included within its scope.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

QUARTER SESSIONS (BOROUGHS) BILL.

(*Mr. Powell Williams, Mr. John Bright, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Houldsworth.*)

[BILL 37.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, the subject was unfortunately a somewhat technical one, and he was afraid that the observations with which he should have to trouble the House would be of a rather dry and uninteresting character. He, however, threw himself upon the indulgence of the House, and promised that he would try to avoid being wearisome. At the time of the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 there were in existence a large number of towns having separate Courts of Quarter Sessions which owed their origin as boroughs to the operation of Charters containing a provision known to lawyers as the Non-Intromittent Clause; that was to say, they contained a clause which prevented the County Justices from entering the borough to exercise jurisdiction or to levy rates. When the Act of 1835 was passed it was seen that there would come into existence under its provisions a large number of boroughs, and the question arose as to the position which these boroughs should occupy in regard to contributing to the county rate. A sort of compromise was effected by which boroughs and towns, all or any part of which had been liable before the 11th of July, 1832, to contribute to the county rate, should continue to be so liable in the event of their incorporation under the new Act. This had given rise to an altogether anomalous and unjust state of things, against which many important towns protested, which it was the object of the Bill to cure, and which the Bill would cure if the House allowed it, as he hoped it would, to pass. There were in existence at the present time in England three classes of towns, two of which enjoyed an exemption from the county rate, which was altogether unfair, and the third was still liable to that rate. The first class comprised towns which, from some cause or other, were not only towns, but counties in themselves, as, for instance, Nottingham and Newcastle, which, being Quarter Sessions towns, paid nothing to the rate of the counties by which they were surrounded. In the second class there were the important towns of Derby and Northampton, both of them having Charters obtained before the 11th of July, 1832, which Charters contained the Non-Intromittent Clause; so that they came under the benefit of Section 150 of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1832. They paid nothing to the counties. Derby paid nothing to Derbyshire, and Nottingham paid nothing to Nottinghamshire. These were two classes both exempt from county rating; and then he came to the third class, which were brought into existence as boroughs subsequently to the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, and which, under the provisions of Section 152 of the Municipal Corporations Act, were still liable to contribute to the county rate. Conspicuous examples of this were the great town of Leeds, which was so well represented in the House, and the town of Birmingham, a division of which he had the honour to represent. What the promoters of this Bill said was that the two first-named classes were unfairly and improperly exempted from county rating. If boroughs of the third class ought to pay—and they were not exempted—why should one class of town pay and the other class not pay? All the towns he had mentioned offered no peculiarity in regard to geographical position which would entitle them to this exemption; and he said again—and he impressed that respectfully upon the House—that it was unfair to distinguish between them in any way, to say to one "Pay," and to the other "You are not to pay." But the flagrant injustice of the thing became more apparent when regard was had to two facts—first, that upon the body which collected and administered this fund the towns which had to contribute to it had no sort of representation; they had no voice in the expenditure of this fund. A thing like that was contrary to a well-known and well-recognized principle of the House. It was anomalous and unjust. The boroughs to which he referred did not want any representation upon the County Board. They said—"Let the county take care of itself and provide for its own requirements, and we will take care of ourselves and provide for our requirements." But still the fact remained that there was a contribution made to a Governing Authority without any representation being given to the community which contributed. The second point he thought the House would admit was of more force. The very purposes to which this contribution was devoted were purposes which the borough had already provided within its own limits and out of its own resources. Why should the borough pay twice for the same purpose? Take Birmingham, for example. He cited Birmingham because it was the town which he was so fortunate as to know most about. But the town of Birmingham contributed £3,000 a-year as county rate. What did it get in return? It got the noble sum of £45 by way of contribution to the repair of two bridges, which were now contained in the borough, but which the county people had used almost as much as the people of the borough. They did not mind abandoning that at any moment; but there being five bridges connected with the borough of Birmingham, three of them were repaired, being for the joint convenience of the borough and the county, jointly at the expense of the county and the borough. That was a proper principle to apply; where the expense was incurred for the joint advantage, then let it be borne between the two. What were the objects to which the borough contributed? Before he read a statement he had in his hand perhaps the House would allow him to mention a fact he knew in regard to Leeds. The borough of Leeds contributed £4,000 a-year to similar purposes —to those purposes for which they had already provided out of their own resources. The total contribution was £8,000 a-year; but he believed £4,000 of that was on account of lunacy, which he would speak about in a moment, and which this Bill did not in the least interfere with. What were the purposes to which the contribution of Birmingham was devoted? First of all, it went to the salary of the Clerk of the Peace and Solicitor. Birmingham had its own Clerk of the Peace and Solicitor. The County Auditor? Well, there was no corresponding official in the borough except a person who held an honorary office. The County Surveyor? They had their own Borough Surveyor, and they paid him a heavy salary. The Justices' Clerks' salary? They had their own, and they paid them heavy salaries. And the Treasurer's salary? They had their own, and paid him a considerable sum of money. The next was the Shire Hall. They were about erecting in Birmingham a very costly building for the purposes of the Assizes. Another purpose was the Judges' House. They were just providing Judges' Lodgings in Birmingham. Petty Sessions Room? That, of course, was an item which they had long ago provided. County bridges and bridgemasters? Lunatics asylums? They had their own lunatic asylum in Birmingham, which was very ample to accommodate the very few lunatics which were to be found in that borough. The next thing was the industrial school. They had their own industrial school. Not to weary the House, the next point was the registration. There might be some difference of opinion in the minds of hon. Members on the point whether the particular constituency everywhere ought to bear the cost of registering its own electors, wheresoever they might happen to live. It seemed to him the expense of registering county electors ought fairly to lie on the county, and ought not to be charged to the borough. Such was a list of purposes to which he referred, and in almost every case—certainly in every important case—they were purposes which had already been subserved by the borough out of its own resources. He asked the House again why should the community pay twice over to the same object when it derived no possible benefit from so doing? It was quite true that there were some purposes which a borough did not in some cases provide for itself out of its own resources, but which it hired from the county. He had referred to the case of Leeds, which he supposed, not having sufficient accommodation for lunatics within its own precincts, hired that accommodation from the county. That was perfectly reasonable, and a proper state of things.

He did not mean to interfere with that by this Bill, which did not touch it in any way. If it was an advantage to any borough to hire any kind of service from the county that was a matter of bargain and sale between them, and need not in any way be disturbed. But that Parliament recognized the principle which he was asserting that boroughs should not pay twice over for the same purpose was clear, even from Section 152, which it was here sought to repeal, because the section expressly said that the borough should not be liable to contribute to the salary and expenses of the Coroner. Why? Because it would be obliged to have him, with his expenses, working within its own limits, and to provide those expenses out of its own resources. What were the objections to the Bill? It was said that the borough derived advantage from appeals to Quarter Sessions. Would the House be surprised to learn—he had it on the authority of the Town Clerk of Leeds—that there had not been a single appeal from the borough of Leeds to the Quarter Sessions of the West Riding since 1883; and as regarded Birmingham, there had been only two appeals during the last five years, and one of those was only nominal, and was disposed of in a moment? Did anybody mean to say that for accommodation such as that a great borough ought to pay £3,000 a-year? It was said that the county rate would be enormously increased if this Bill were passed. Sir George Morrison, the Town Clerk of Leeds, had shown that whereas the total rating of the West Riding was about £167,000 a-year, only about £20,000 of that amount was collected from the Quarter Sessions boroughs, so that the talk about the enormous increase of the rating was not accurate. And suppose there was an increase of the rating, which was best able to bear it—the borough or the county? Sir George Morrison stated that the rating of the West Riding was about 4*d.* in the pound. The rating of the county of Warwickshire, in which Birmingham was situated, was less than 4*d.* Everybody knew that unfortunately the rating of the boroughs themselves was very greatly in excess of that sum, and therefore, if there was anything in that argument, the county was quite as well or better able to bear that expenditure than was the borough. It was said that the boroughs had the advantage of the use of the county bridges and roads. But had not the counties the advantage of the use of the borough streets, which they used pretty extensively on market days? And they got the advantage of the paving, watering, lighting, and watching of those streets "free gratis—for nothing." In the borough of Leeds there were 269 miles of streets, and in Birmingham over 200 miles of streets, and the boroughs did not charge the counties a single halfpenny in respect of these streets, and why should the counties ask the boroughs to pay for their roads? It was said that the county had a vested interest in the payments that were being made. But was not 50 years long enough to have paid? Even if a county had incurred any capital expenditure in respect of the accommodation required by a borough, that capital expenditure either had, or ought to have been, wiped out long ago. But he had no belief in a vested interest in an unjust payment such as he conceived this contribution by a borough to a county to be. The only serious objection he had heard against the Bill was that it did not go far enough. The towns of Halifax and Huddersfield, which were Quarter Sessions boroughs without any Non-Intromittent Clause in their Charters, and were, therefore, liable to make this contribution, complained that they would not be exempt from the contribution under the Bill. They ought to be exempt, so far as they could show that the purposes to which the contribution was being devoted was provided by themselves. He was perfectly willing that a clause should be introduced into the Bill in Committee, which would exempt the boroughs of Huddersfield and Halifax, and other boroughs in a similar position, from the unjust taxation which it was the object of the measure he was recommending to the House to remove. In conclusion, he begged to thank the House for the attention and indulgence with which they had favoured him, and to express an earnest hope that the Bill would commend itself to the sense of justice of the House, and that the House would read it a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Powell Williams.*)

Mr. HANBURY (Preston), in rising to move the rejection of the Bill, said, he hoped that if the House agreed to read the Bill a second time at all they would not read it a second time that day. The Bill had been introduced once before, and on that occasion it was only printed on the very day that the second reading was moved, and this time it was only in the hands of Members on Friday last. This would not have mattered so much if the Bill had been a simple Bill, and had stated on the face of it what it purported to be; but in reality it was a highly technical Bill, which referred to past Acts of Parliament, and did not on the face of it state what was the real purport and intention of the Bill. The Bill had a very misleading title. Anybody seeing the Quarter Sessions (Boroughs) Bill would suppose it was a Bill which affected nobody but Quarter Sessions boroughs. In fact, when he first communicated with the authorities of the borough he represented (Preston) the answer he received was that the Bill did not affect them. He, however, advised them to look more closely into the Bill, and he had that morning received an answer from the Town Clerk of Preston saying that the Bill would be most detrimental to the interests of the borough, the actual effect being to increase its contributions to the county, in round figures, by one-third—namely, from £1,666 to £2,539, an increase of £873, equal to about 3*s.* 4*d.* in the pound on the rateable value of the borough. The whole question of municipal boroughs was thoroughly gone into by a Committee which sat in 1882; and if Quarter Sessions boroughs had any objection to make they should have made them then, when the law was consolidated into one Act dealing with the whole question and intelligible to everybody. It was also well known that Government contemplated introducing a Bill dealing with the whole question of Local Government; and it would not be right to have the matter complicated by a Bill of this character. There were objections to the Bill being read a second time at the present moment. So far, however, from the Bill being a good Bill, it was a very bad one. The Bill sought to redress grievances, not by curing them, but by shifting the burthen from one shoulder and putting it on another. He always paid great attention to the literary productions of the Birmingham Corporation, because they always stated with unhesitating frankness the real intentions of their Bills. It did not seem to matter to them much whether the objects sought were just or unjust, if only the members of that particular Corporation could get their own way on a subject. What were the statements boldly made in the statement issued by the Birmingham Corporation? That a considerable number of Corporations had not made the same provision that Birmingham had made. The result would be that a considerable number of Corporations which had not satisfied the requirements would obtain them at the expense of the county, without making any contribution in return. The Bill was based on a very plausible ground. It was stated that a great many Quarter Sessions boroughs which were in existence before 1832 did not contribute to the county rate; and the promoters of the Bill said—"Why should we contribute any more than they do?" There was no practical reason whatever for the uniformity of exemption which was proposed in the Bill. In the first place, the Quarter Sessions boroughs in existence before 1832 were boroughs which had been long exempt from the contributions to the county, and therefore it was no injustice to the county to allow their continuance; but it was a very different thing to create a new exemption. Then, again, in those days the work done was very different, for a great deal of work had been thrown on the Quarter Sessions in counties which was formerly done by the Quarter Sessions in boroughs, and it would be manifestly unfair that the Quarter Sessions boroughs should be exempt, not only from the old charges, but from new taxes in the benefit of which they had shared. Then there was another reason which showed the distinction between these boroughs. It was that in a good many cases the old Quarter Sessions boroughs were county towns, and as such were totally distinct from the county, and transacted their own business within their own area. A still further difference was that whereas the old Quarter Sessions boroughs before 1832 were small boroughs, the boroughs which now claimed exemption from the county rates were very different. But there was still another point which was very important. Supposing the Bill passed, and the Quarter Sessions boroughs were not be exempt from contribution to the county rates, what would be the result? The result would be that if they made the boroughs exempt from the county rating, they would indirectly give the Crown the power to interfere with the rates and practically alter the area of rating. He thought that was a very important feature in connection with the measure, and one that ought not to be lost sight of. It did seem to him that large democratic towns appealing to a democratic Parliament like the present, and raising their claim to be exempted from county contribution, had a very much simpler remedy in their own hands that would do justice not only to the boroughs, but to the counties also. What was the principle? The principle, as had been laid down by the hon. Member for Birmingham, was that no place should pay twice over. He perfectly admitted the justice of that principle; but there was a preliminary question ahead of this, and that was, how far was it right to take any town out of the county, and thereby increase the rates in the county? That was a part of a very large question, which demanded very careful attention before it was decided. When the hon. Member for Birmingham said that, because they had a Quarter Sessions in Birmingham, therefore they were doing everything that was done by the Quarter Sessions outside in the county, he must remind him that the Quarter Sessions in Birmingham and that in the county of Warwick had two totally distinct kinds of work to do. Birmingham might have a larger jurisdiction than most other boroughs, but it still depended on the county for its Assize. But the fact was that these Quarter Sessions boroughs, trading on the name of Quarter Sessions, had already a great number of exemptions—certainly two or three of the most material character from the county rates—and which showed no reason whatever for those exemptions. There were the questions of main roads and the administration of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, in respect to which the Quarter Sessions boroughs obtained exemption, and yet what on earth were these to do with having a different Quarter Session? He contended that if there were to be any exemptions at all, they ought to be taken fairly all round, and the ordinary municipal borough ought to be placed on nearly the same footing as the other ones. A great deal of the complaints raised by the Quarter Sessions boroughs were complaints which might be raised by any municipality in the Kingdom. It had been said as a reason why the Bill should pass that those who contributed the rate had no voice in the expenditure of the county. Surely the hon. Member knew enough about county government to know that that remark would apply to every rural district throughout the country. We had not yet got representative government in the counties, and therefore that argument was a very good one in favour of County Boards; but it was no argument whatever in favour of exempting Quarter Sessions boroughs from contribution to the county rates. A great deal had been said about these boroughs extending their bounds and erecting public buildings, &c.; but that was equally the case with other municipal towns. The curious fact about the Bill was that while Quarter Sessions boroughs were already unduly exempt from county rates, with the result that the rates they ought to pay fell on the ordinary municipalities, they were not content with that exemption, but wanted to go a great deal further, and the result would be that, if the Bill was passed into law, it would mean an addition of $\frac{3}{4}d.$ in the pound to the rates on all the other towns, which would be, in his opinion, a great hardship. Let them take the question of asylums. That question was touched very delicately in the Bill, because it was a very weak part of the case. That question, however, was a very important one, and he thought they ought to know definitely and distinctly whether the promoters of the Bill intended to exclude lunatic asylums or not, because the effect in Lancashire, if they were excluded, would be very serious. The rateable value of four of the large Quarter Sessions boroughs was £6,500,000 out of £18,500,000 for the whole county; and whereas the boroughs sent 2,000 lunatics to the asylums out of a total of 4,000, they only paid £19,000 out of a total of £57,000. In fact, the boroughs only paid a third of the cost, while they sent half the lunatics. That was bad enough under the present system, but it would be much worse if that Bill were allowed to pass. Then let them take the question of bridges. He wanted to know who were to undertake the bridges if it was not the Quarter Sessions boroughs? In Manchester and Bolton there were six county and 16 borough bridges; and if that Bill were to pass, although there were those 22 bridges, the towns would only have to contribute one-fourth of the expense. Taking the case of vagrant lunatics, in the year ending on the 31st of May, in the county of Lancaster 53 out of 82 vagrant lunatics were from Manchester and Liverpool alone, and out of a total of 494, 369 were admitted from those two boroughs. Therefore, they contributed three-fourths of the lunatics, and only contributed one-half of the expense. Let them take another question—that of registration. The hon. Member for Birmingham said that they had their own register of voters in Birmingham. But the hon. Member seemed to forget that in Birmingham there were a large number of county voters; and why should not Birmingham, therefore, be called in to pay its share of the expense? Then there was the Militia, but he should like to know what that had to do with the fact of having separate Quarter Sessions? Then the hon. Member had brought forward the case of county buildings, which he seemed to think was a special grievance, and he said that Birmingham had built a great Shire Hall where the Assizes were held. But that had nothing to do with Birmingham as a Quarter Sessions borough. If Birmingham liked to build a Shire Hall for the glorification of Birmingham then let it do so; but that was no reason why it should cease to continue to contribute to the county rate. It was the more reason rather for bringing it more closely into connection with the county. The greatest grievance of all seemed to be with reference to the Clerk of the Peace. The hon. Member said that Birmingham had a Clerk of the Peace of its own, and asked, therefore, why it should be called in to contribute to the Clerk of the Peace for the county? Well, he admitted that, to a certain extent, there was justice in that complaint; but the hon. Member must recollect that the boroughs were not altogether independent of the Clerk of the Peace of the county, because, as he had said, certain appeals of their own Justices were brought before the Judges of Assize by those by whom the Clerk of the Peace was employed. Therefore, to some extent, they were entitled to the services of the latter, and ought to contribute their share of the expense. With regard to the Clerks to the Justices, he contended that there was no grievance at all, because the fees received covered, and more than covered, the Clerks' salaries. On all these grounds, and because, moreover, the Bill had been printed so late that the great majority of Members had been unable to master its provisions, he moved that it be read a second time on that day six months.

Colonel GUNTER (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash), in seconding the Amendment, said, the hon. Gentleman who moved the second reading of the Bill was more or less in error in the figures which he gave as to the rateable value of the West Riding of Yorkshire. The hon. Gentleman gave the rateable value of the Riding as £16,600,000; but if he would refer to the statement of the Treasurer of the Riding he would find that the rateable value was only £10,484,509.

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS: The figures I quoted were supplied by the Town Clerk of Leeds.

Colonel GUNTER, continuing, said, that why he had interposed in the debate was that the constituency which he had the honour to represent ran up to the town of Leeds, more or less surrounded it, and, consequently, would be very greatly affected if the Bill became law. The hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) had, in moving the rejection of the Bill, gone into the general features of the question; so that he (Colonel Gunter), with the permission of the House, would only mention one or two particulars in which the measure would affect the West Riding. The West Riding contained five large boroughs, probably the largest, and most known of which, was the town of Leeds. The present rateable value of the Riding was about £10,500,000; but if the Bill passed it would be reduced to under £7,000,000 sterling, a reduction of about one-third of the whole. The Bill would affect the county constituencies to the extent of about £20,000 a-year. The Mover of the Bill had said that the contribution from the boroughs was only $\frac{3}{4}$*d.* in the pound. It might be taken, therefore, that the sum contributed by the large boroughs, such as Birmingham and the large places in Yorkshire and Lancashire, would be very small. But by the Municipal Acts of 1835 and 1882, it was never in the slightest degree intended that the large towns should be taken out of the counties, so far as contributions to county rates were concerned. The Charters were granted to the large towns as Municipal Bodies, and not as Quarter Sessions boroughs. Now, the West Riding of Yorkshire would be very seriously affected if the large sums contributed by the Quarter Sessions boroughs of Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, and boroughs of the same kind were dropped, and municipal boroughs, such as Harrogate and Ripon, would suffer in proportion. He trusted the House would agree with him that this Bill was a most unfair Bill. It was said that Municipalities had a twofold expenditure; but he pointed out that the second expenditure they made was made in their municipal capacities, and not in the capacities of Quarter Sessions towns. Municipalities expended large sums in sanitary works, in gas and water, and so forth; but surely municipal towns would expend money upon such things whether there were any Quarter Sessions held in the towns or not. Then, of course, Quarter Sessions boroughs had only jurisdiction over criminal business; but there was a great deal of civil work carried on in Quarter Sessions boroughs. It could not be concluded for a moment that the boroughs ought not to be called upon to contribute towards the expenses of the various offices necessary for the carrying on of civil business. The Assize business enters very largely into the calculation; and when it was said that the people of the West Riding of Yorkshire had nothing to do with the buildings, let him point out that towards the Assize buildings and the county offices, where the Quarter Sessions were held at Leeds, the Riding originally contributed £4,000. Again, the main roads formed a large and important element of the question. It was well known that the greatest traffic on main roads was principally between large towns; and the roads were, therefore, more cut up by the heavy carts of brewers and others from the Quarter Session towns than by any countrymen who went into town for market purposes. Most of the large towns in the West Riding had Quarter Sessions. The large towns, therefore, caused the greater wear and tear of the roads. Personally, he much regretted that the turnpike system had been abolished. He should be very glad to see it restored, because he considered it the very fairest means of maintaining the country roads. Again, as to bridges. In the borough of Leeds one bridge was entirely repaired by the county, and towards another bridge the county contributed £2,000—a sum which, if capitalized, would give a very good amount per annum towards the maintenance of the bridges. Another, and to him as a county Member much more important matter, was the bearing of the Bill upon the suppression of disease amongst animals. In Leeds and Wakefield there were held large cattle markets. To those markets a large number of cattle, both Irish and foriegn, was taken, and it was a well-known fact that much of the disease disseminated in the West Riding sprung from those places. Why should the people of Leeds and Wakefield object to carry out the law by stamping out such disease, or to pay a fair proportion of the expense caused by their having scattered it throughout the county? The boroughs had by law always been considered part of the counties in which they were situated; and he trusted the House would think that it was only just and fair they should still be considered so. Mr. Justice Blackburn, when speaking of the Act of 1835 in the case Regina against the inhabitants of Windsor, which was heard in 1875, said—"This seems to be just legislation." Such he (Colonel Gunter) considered it, and he hoped the House would entertain the same view, and that, therefore, they would defer the second reading of the Bill for six months, as the hon. Member for Preston had proposed.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. MILNES GASKELL (York, W.R., Morley) remarked that he held in his hand a great deal of information upon this subject; but he was bound to say that nearly the whole of it had already been presented to the House by the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment, and therefore he thought that if he wished to have the indulgence of the House on any other occasion, he had better not trouble it now with a recapitulation of the arguments which it had just heard. As the hon. Member for Birmingham had said, the measure was of a technical character. A friend of his asked him whether or not the object of the Bill was not to charge Quarter Sessions boroughs with some of the expense of the county rates, and that was an indication of how much this subject had been appreciated by the House. In the West Riding they were very proud of their five Quarter Sessions boroughs, and of their rateable values, amounting to more than £3,500,000. He would like to know from what quarter the Bill emanated? It did not emanate from the Quarter Sessions boroughs themselves, for there were many of these boroughs, some of them in Yorkshire, which knew nothing about it, and did not care two straws about the matter. His belief was that it emanated wholly and entirely from the Town Clerks of Leeds and Birmingham; and his explanation of it was that whereas a title was given lately to the Town Clerk of Leeds, the Town Clerk of Birmingham was under the impression that whichever Government was in Office he would get a Peerage for the part he had taken with this Bill. The hon. Member for Birmingham had said that the Bill would not interfere with lunatics; but it had been shown by the Mover of the Amendment that it would. By Section 150 of the Act of 1835, it was provided that no borough which had a separate Quarter Sessions should contribute towards any county rate except as specially provided. In a very short time they hoped to have a general measure of local government; and it was hardly reasonable now to discuss, in an Afternoon Sitting, a matter which was wholly and solely a question for experts, on the eve of getting such a Bill. It was exactly the same thing as if the House was asked to confer a fancy franchise just before a great measure of enfranchisement for the whole Kingdom. He hoped the House would see the advisability of throwing out the Bill, and that the Government would also see the necessity of a similar course, and speak with no uncertain voice on the subject. This was a mine sprung upon the counties, which did not want their county life broken in upon by such an insidious Bill. He knew that in the last century Englishmen—according to one of the greatest writers—were said to boast one against the other of the sums they paid to the public Revenue; and a French writer said that one man, who paid 5,000 guineas to the Revenue, was prouder of his contribution than the man who paid 4,000 guineas. He did not suppose that we should see that golden age again in this century of repudiation; but they might expect that rich and important boroughs, 17 in all, should not attempt to shirk the contribution that they were properly liable to, and which certainly ought to be continued until the Local Government Bill was presented to the House.

MR. DAWSON (Leeds, E.) said, that the Bill greatly affected the town which he had the honour to represent. Hopes had been held out that at an early day there would be brought before the House of Commons a large measure of local government. That argument had been used many times during the last 15 or 16 years when any reform had been proposed that would come within the purview of that measure; and it was quite possible that other matters of importance, and other reforms which were necessary in the interests of justice, might cause a further postponement of the large measure of local government. Those who supported the Bill were also told that if this was an injustice and a wrong to a limited number of boroughs, the matter ought to have been entered into and a reform brought about when the law was being arranged in 1882; but the Act of 1882 was purely a measure for the consolidation of previous Acts; and he was told that in these purely Consolidation Acts it was contrary to usage and convenience that any debateable or contentious matter should be imported into its consideration. That was the only reason why this injustice, which was recognized as such in 1882, was not then removed. The hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) entreated the House not, by passing this Bill, to introduce further complication into an already complicated matter; but might he point out to the hon. Member that the complication existed at the present time, and that it was sought to remove it? The complication that existed was that certain Quarter Sessions boroughs were exempted from paying county rates, while certain other Quarter Sessions boroughs were liable to be rated for county purposes. They had heard a great deal about the injustice of saying that Municipal Corporations should be exempt from paying county rates; but the vast majority of Quarter Sessions boroughs were already exempt. It had been enunciated by the Legislature of this country that it was an act of great injustice to ask Quarter Sessions boroughs to contribute to the county rate; and all that the Bill asked was that this principle should be carried to its logical issue by the exemption of all Quarter Sessions boroughs from such a contribution. The hon. Member for Morley (Mr. Milnes Gaskell) made a pathetic appeal to the House not to perpetrate an act of Vandalism by tearing away the boroughs from the county life; but there was no proposal in the Bill which would have such an effect. The boroughs were willing to remain part of the county life if they were not compelled by law to contribute to the borough life, to which the county life paid nothing. The town of Leeds contributed something like £8,000 a-year to the county rate. The hon. Member for Preston had said that it was absolutely necessary that someone interested in the Bill should make a clear and distinct statement as to the effect it would have on the contributions paid by these Quarter Sessions boroughs for the maintenance of lunatics. It was not within the scope of the Bill, and it was not the desire of Quarter Sessions boroughs, to refuse to contribute towards the maintenance of lunatics. Birmingham was in the happy position of having far more accommodation for its lunatics than it wanted. Leeds was in a still happier position, for it had not had any occasion to erect a lunatic asylum. But accidents did sometimes happen in the best regulated families; and if there was in Leeds a *lusus naturæ* in the form of a lunatic, then he was sent to the county asylum and paid for by the town of Leeds, which paid £4,000 a-year to the county for that purpose. Therefore the sum, the justice of which Leeds disputed at the present moment, was £4,000 a-year which she contributed towards the maintenance of institutions which she had already provided for herself. At Leeds there was a Court House, but that town had also to pay for the Shire Hall, for Court Houses, and other buildings at Todmorden and Holmfirth, which were far distant from Leeds, and could be of no use to the town. There were also handsome Judges' lodgings provided by the borough of Leeds; and why, in addition to paying for the entertainment of Judges there, they should also pay for the entertainment of Judges at York simply passed his comprehension. Then there were the smaller matters of the county officials whom Leeds had to pay for. Then there were the Borough Clerk of the Peace, the Borough Treasurer, the Borough Solicitor, and the Borough Auditor. Those were paid for as similar offices which were paid for in the county; but in the case of magistrates' clerks Leeds provided its own magistrates. There was one thing which had not been alluded to in the course of the debate, the question of juvenile offenders. The town of Leeds, it had been said, should provide for the maintenance of its own juvenile offenders; but it did so, and it was maintaining its own reformatory for juvenile offenders, while, at the same time, it had to pay for that of the West Riding of Yorkshire. There was another point. They were told after all that the Clerk of the Peace acted for Leeds as well as for the county. But there were two prisons which were not far from Leeds—one was Armley, to which the Leeds prisoners were sent. The town of Leeds had to pay the pensions and contribute towards the officers at Armley Prison. But there was another at Wakefield where no Leeds prisoners went, and yet Leeds had to contribute to the pensions of officials at Wakefield as well as Armley. Now, that was certainly unjust. The hon. Member for Preston said that, after all, the town of Leeds was never averse to have these, and gave the House to understand that magistrates' clerks and all these officials were mere articles of luxury.

Mr. HANBURY said, he referred to the Assizes.

Mr. DAWSON said, that one would think they were kept for their own glorification; but he maintained that all these officials he had named were officials whom the town of Leeds must maintain by law; and that being so, it was unjust to compel them to maintain one set of officials of their own and another set of officials who were of no use to them. They were told that appeals were made to the Quarter Sessions at Wakefield; but the hon. Member for Birmingham had shown that since 1883 there had been only one appeal from Wakefield and only one from Birmingham, and one was merely formal. He did not doubt that when we had county government we should not have this anomaly. It would be swept away, and the apparent excuse for the anomaly would also be taken away. One word with regard to bridges. The hon. Member for Preston said the borough was compelled to contribute to county bridges, and therefore he did not see why they should not contribute to the expenses of the county surveyor. He would give one instance. A fortnight ago there was in the town of Leeds a county rate for the bridge which was entirely inadequate for the purpose. The county were asked to repair the bridge; they refused; but they politely and kindly allowed the town to make a new bridge at its own expense. Here they had a county bridge in the borough of Leeds which for years and years had been contributed to by the county rate. That county rate was inadequate to the wants of the borough; and now the county compelled the borough to build a bridge at its own expense, and yet the county would for the next 100 years come and claim a quota from Leeds for the county bridge. That was a fair instance; and he thought something ought to be done to remedy that. The hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Gunter) said it would add £20,000 to the rates of the West Riding. Not at all; it would add £10,000, or only one-half. Those contributions would not be affected by this Bill at all; and the actual increase to the rates of the West Riding would not be the whole of the £20,000, but £10,000, which would be left after the boroughs had paid the rates they were liable for. He wished to say one word about the Quarter Sessions boroughs, which, it was said, did not claim that all these charges should be taken away at once, but only that they should be obliged to pay for objects in which they had an interest. He had a letter from the Town Clerk of Leeds last night, in which that gentleman said there were one or two small matters, such as registration, town clerks, voters, and one or two other small matters, which they did not object to pay, if Parliament thought proper to impose the liability upon them. If the county Members said it was unfair that these Quarter Sessions boroughs to which this referred should be exempted from their contribution to the local rates, he entreated them to be consistent, and to bring in a Bill to impose the necessity on all boroughs to contribute to county rates. But if they said it was unjust that these 15 or 16 Quarter Sessions boroughs should be exempted, he asked them how they could sit in their places and allow such enormous injustice to remain unredressed as 50 or 60 of these boroughs not to pay anything at all? The Quarter Sessions boroughs did not want to pay for what they provided for themselves; and he hoped that, notwithstanding what had been said about tearing the boroughs out of the county map, and in spite of the intention said to be entertained of bringing in a Local Government Bill at some period in the dim and distant future, the House would see its way to perform what was a simple act of justice, and say that the 15 Quarter Sessions boroughs to which the Bill applied should be placed on the same footing as other Quarter Sessions boroughs which were exempt from contributing to the county rate.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) said, he thought the House was very much indebted to the hon. Member for Preston for having exposed the injustice that would be done if Quarter Sessions boroughs were to be favoured at the expense of those which did not happen to be Quarter Sessions boroughs, and of the rural districts generally. He wished to refer to one item which had not been mentioned in the course of the debate—namely, the cost of the Militia. During the last half-year Birmingham paid £238 towards the county rate of Warwick with respect to the Militia. If the Militia was useful it was just as useful to Birmingham as to the whole county. The objection of the 15 Quarter Sessions boroughs was that the remaining Quarter Sessions boroughs were placed in a better position than they were themselves. If it were an injustice to have these excepted boroughs, then the most proper thing for the 15 boroughs to do was not to place themselves in a similarly unjust position, but to go in for making these excepted boroughs pay what they did not pay. He had no doubt it was the opinion of those who brought in this Bill that both the county and the borough should equitably bear their respective burdens; but it did not seem to him that, as the Bill stood, it would carry out that object, and therefore if the House went to a division he would vote with the hon. Member for Preston.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) said, that when he was Secretary of State for the Home Department two deputations waited upon him, one from the boroughs and one from the counties, with reference to this particular subject; and it seemed right that he should tell the House the conclusion at which he had arrived about it. If the Bill passed as it stood it certainly seemed to him that no contribution could be levied from the boroughs for any county purpose whatever, even for lunatic and asylum purposes. Let them see how that would work. Taking his own county of Lancashire, he found that that county had spent no less than £250,000 in enlarging the lunatic asylums to which all lunatics from Liverpool could be sent. That being so, it would be extremely hard to saddle the county with the whole of that charge when Liverpool obtained so great an advantage, and yet under this Bill would not contribute a single farthing. Again, as regarded vagrant lunatics, he found that out of 500 cases 267 cases came from Liverpool and 102 from Manchester. If the boroughs were not to pay anything in connection with these vagrant lunatics, it would be an extreme hardship upon the county. As far as the Bill stood, therefore, he must decidedly and absolutely oppose it. But he would go further. He maintained that property had been owned, bought, and sold in municipal boroughs subject to county rates. Therefore, if this Bill passed as it stood it would take a large sum of money, not out of the county alone, but out of all boroughs in Lancashire which did not happen to be Quarter Session boroughs, in order to put it into the hands of the owners of property who happened to be living in those boroughs at the particular time. The hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Dawson) had referred to the Assize Courts at Leeds; but if the people of Leeds, in respect for having built the Court Houses there free of any charge to the county, as they undertook to do when the Assizes were transferred from York, were now to claim exemption from rates for the Court House buildings at York it would be a gross breach of faith. As to county bridges, there were six of these bridges repaired by the county of Lancashire, and 16 which were repaired by the various hundreds which were actually within the area of these Quarter Sessions boroughs; and if the Bill were to pass the effect would be that where these bridges were in the middle of the towns the inhabitants of those towns would not be called upon to pay anything towards their repair, the expense falling upon the county and other boroughs. Nothing could be more unjust than a provision of this kind. He was surprised that the hon. Member for Leeds had gone into this matter of county bridges. The real fact regarding the bridge at Leeds was that it was a county bridge, rebuilt in 1825, £15,000 being raised by public subscription, and £9,000 being contributed by the county. The Leeds Corporation in 1871 went in for a Municipal Improvement Bill; and, among other things, proposed to enlarge the bridge. The county, very properly, refused to saddle itself with the expense of building a larger bridge, and the Leeds Corporation did the work at their own cost. But when the Private Bill passed the county made a calculation of what the sum was that they had been in the habit of paying for keeping the old bridge in repair, and, capitalizing the sum, actually paid down to the Corporation of Leeds no less than £2,000 in lieu of further payment for the future repair of the bridge. Under these circumstances, it could hardly be said that the county had contributed nothing towards the rebuilding of the bridge. He was not prepared to say that there were not certain small matters in which the boroughs had a right to ask for relief; but he objected to the Bill because it was an actual transfer of property from one pocket to another. He would like the Government to state what course they intended to pursue. His opinion was that the small matters which had to be remedied were things which could well stand over. Both sides of the House had promised a large scheme for the purpose of regulating county government; but if they were to pass this Bill the difficulties in the way of carrying any such scheme through Parliament would be very much intensified. He hoped hon. Members would agree to allow the subject under discussion to stand over until the county scheme came before the House.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham) said, he thought that the hon. Member for Birmingham introduced the Bill in a fair, clear, and able speech. At the same time, he was bound to say that the measure was one of a very crude kind. It was a rough-and-ready proposal for remedying the injustice complained of. He did not deny that an injustice was done in respect of Quarter Sessional boroughs in the matter of certain charges; but if the Bill passed into law in its present form, more injustice would be done to other boroughs and portions of the counties than would be removed. He ventured, therefore, on the part of the Government, to make an appeal to the hon. Member for Birmingham that he should not press the Bill to a division. If he did, the Government would be bound to vote against it. He could promise the hon. Member that the matter should have consideration; and his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary desired him to say that he considered it was a question which had so many anomalies and difficulties connected with it that he wished to make inquiries with regard to it over all parts of the country by sending a Commissioner to the various Quarter Sessional boroughs, or by some other method of obtaining information. Scarcely two Quarter Sessional boroughs could be brought forward in which the grievance complained of was the same, or in which the payments were made on the same principle. Some were exempted under the Municipal Act and some were not. Thus, the greatest anomalies existed. With regard to lunatic asylums the difficulty was very great. There were three classes of Quarter Sessional boroughs when they came to deal with lunatic asylums—those with separate lunacy areas, those annexed to the county for lunacy purposes, and those which were contributory. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the late Home Secretary that there was a very great doubt as to whether, if the Bill became law in its present form, the boroughs which would be exempted under it would not become exempt from contribution for lunacy purposes. That would be doing a great injustice. The Bill would affect the various boroughs in Lancashire, which were not Quarter Sessional boroughs, very seriously. Some of these boroughs were almost as large, and in some cases larger, than certain of the Quarter Sessional boroughs. They had such towns as Preston, Oldham, Ashton, and Bolton—he rather thought the last town was a Quarter Sessions borough—but the cost in four of the large Quarter Sessions boroughs in Lancashire for lunacy, roads, and general purposes was £26,400 per annum; and, supposing the Bill passed, all that amount would be thrown on the remainder of the county, and the other boroughs in the county would suffer a serious injustice. It would be impossible to pass the Bill in its present form. It would require very great alteration, and the matter would, perhaps, have to be considered by a Committee. Then there was the further fact that Her Majesty's Government had in preparation—he might say that it was prepared—a large Bill dealing with county government reform. This subject of county government reform had been dealt with on two previous occasions; but he did not think any Bill had been brought in by the Liberal side of the House. He trusted that they might shortly have an opportunity of bringing in a measure dealing with the question. If they had such an opportunity, that would be the strongest argument in favour of the Bill now under discussion either being withdrawn, or not being allowed to pass on the present occasion. A great deal had been said on the various details of the Bill; but he would not go into them further, as he thought the subject had been sufficiently thrashed out. He put it to the hon. Member for Birmingham that, as the matter was one really for inquiry, he would effect his purpose in a much better way if he withdrew his Bill, and allowed the inquiry which the Home Secretary proposed to take place, than by pressing it to a division.

MR. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central) said, after what had fallen from the Secretary to the Admiralty he would not detain the House long. Whatever might be said against the Bill as it stood, it was an attempt to deal with a grievance which was a real one. Those who supported the measure had two strong arguments in its favour. First, there was a great inequality of treatment as between different classes of Quarter Sessions boroughs; and, secondly, it could not be denied that it was an injustice to any borough to be called upon to pay twice over for the same thing. What the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Powell Williams) proposed was to place all Quarter Sessions boroughs on the same footing. At present there was a distinction between them; but he did not know what reason there was for the distinction. It seemed to him clearly made out that there was a large number of matters in respect of which Quarter Sessions boroughs now had to contribute to the county rate, while they themselves had to provide and to pay for similar arrangements within the borough. In Birmingham he understood that only a very small fraction of the contribution made to the county rate was spent on objects from which the borough derived advantage; and the same might be said of Leeds, the borough which he had the honour to represent. It had been said that a great deal of property had been bought and sold in the last few years; and, therefore, the effect of such a Bill as that would be to transfer property from one set of persons to another. But he did not believe that the principle would be recognized that any part of the community had a vested right to the taxes imposed on another part of the community. He did not deny that a good many of the arguments brought against the Bill as it stood were sound. He thought in some cases the Bill, if it was passed as it stood, might create injustice and hardship; but the point on which they ought to fix their attention was this. An enormous change had taken place during the last 50 or more years in the position of the great Quarter Sessions boroughs. They had really become gigantic self-supporting communities, and what was really asked for in the Bill was that they should be completely autonomous. If things were allowed to continue as they were, the practical effect would be that the county would have a kind of vested right to the increased and increasing rateable property in the large boroughs, and that the boroughs would have the privilege not merely of paying for what they provided for themselves, but also would be mulcted in an annual sum because certain expenditure had been incurred by the county in their behalf 50 years ago. That was a state of things which involved a real hardship; and, therefore, he should support the Bill if pressed to a division.

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.) said, that after the statement made by the Secretary to the Admiralty he should ask permission to withdraw the Bill, the understanding being that there would be an immediate inquiry on the part of the Government, either by a Commission or otherwise, and that the result of such inquiry would be communicated to Parliament without delay.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) expressed his willingness to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Bill *withdrawn.*

ALLOTMENTS AND SMALL HOLDINGS BILL.—[Bill 53.]

(*Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Burt, Mr. Broadhurst, Captain Verney, Mr. Arch, Dr. Foster, Mr. Flower, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Newnes.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Dr. FOSTER (Chester), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that the object of the Bill was to confer upon Local Authorities power to acquire land, and afterwards to let the land to the poorer agricultural classes. The principle was already upon the Statute Book embodied in several Acts of Parliament. These Statutes were very complicated, and practically unworkable; but they indicated the principle embodied in the Bill. It was, therefore, no new principle, but one in accordance with the traditions of English legislation. The principle of the Bill had also received a large amount of support in the debate and in the division upon the Amendment to the Address moved by the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Jesse Collings), upon which the late Government had been defeated. In the debate the principle received not only the sanction of the right hon. Gentleman who was now Prime Minister, but also the sanction of some Members of the late Government. The Bill, or some legislation in the same direction, was required in the interests of the rural districts. It was the best Conservatism to support a Bill of this character, for it would have the effect of bringing back and keeping the agricultural classes in the rural districts. They were the backbone of the country; but the number of persons engaged in agriculture was fast decreasing. During the last 20 years in England 627,000 people had ceased to be engaged in that industry—that was to say, more than 30,000 people a-year were leaving the rural districts to enter towns or cross the sea. Parties on both sides must regret that this depopulation was sapping the strength of the country. In 1861 the agricultural population in the country formed 1-10th of the whole population. By the process of divorce from the soil which had been going on, the proportion had been reduced to 1-19th, while the other classes of the working population had all increased, according to the last Census. The causes of this were threefold—the bad wages, bad cottages, and bad prospects of the agricultural labourers. Wages were again beginning to decline, and it was sad to think that men should have to support themselves, their wives, and families on 12*s.* a-week, or even less. From such wages it was impossible for labourers to pay the reasonable rental of good cottages. What was wanted was such a condition as would enable the rent of good cottages to be paid. A great many insanitary cottages had been pulled down by landlords, who were only too ready, in many cases, to take a hint from the Sanitary Inspector in the direction of demolition, without doing anything in the direction of reconstruction. Thus the poor had been driven to herd together in villages under very unwholesome conditions. As to the prospects of the agricultural labourer, was it not melancholy to think that, after a life of incessant toil, he could only expect to end his crippled old age in a workhouse? The purpose of the Bill was to cheer and stimulate the efforts of the industrious labourer by giving him an opportunity of adding to his earnings by the cultivation of an allotment, the produce of which would help to maintain his household, and, if there were any surplus, be sold for his benefit. The cultivation of an acre allotment would, it was calculated, add 4*s.* a-week to a labourer's income; and it would have the additional advantage of supplying him and his family with more nutritious food than they could now obtain. The Bill also made provision for the purchase of small holdings of 10, 20, 30, or, perhaps, 40 acres, in the interest of the labourer who was able to save up and repay the necessary part of the purchase money. He justified the interference of the Legislature on the ground that the rural population had been reduced to its present miserable condition by long legislative neglect, and by the absorption of the common lands to swell the estates of large landowners. The position of the labourer had gone down for the last 100 years, for in 1770 the purchasing power of his wages was relatively greater, his house rent proportionately less, and he had the benefit of the common lands for pasturage, fuel, &c. In the agricultural prosperity between 1853 and 1877, when landlords' rents went up some 27 per cent, his wages were but slightly increased, and he suffered from the loss of his rights to commons and waste lands, 7,000,000 acres of which had been inclosed to swell the broad acres of the rich. It was true that the system of allotments had existed for some hundred years under voluntary arrangements; but during that time voluntary effort must have done its work very badly when they had that keen land hunger on the part of the peasantry of which many hon. Members on the Liberal Benches were witnesses. The agricultural labourers of the Eastern Counties more especially were driven to trust to some measure such as he was proposing, rather than to the voluntary efforts which had disappointed them for so many years. Voluntary effort would still leave much for Local Authorities to do; and the Local Authorities, he believed, would do the work more effectually than any voluntary effort in the past had given them reason to suppose it would do in the future. Even although, according to a recent publication, 1-14th part of the cultivated area of the country was happily blessed with benevolent landlords, it was necessary to take care of the rest. And in the area which was blessed with landlords willing to do their duty to the labourers, and in many cases, he was glad to say, more than their duty, they had evidence that the allotments were of a comparatively small size. He found that in more than one-half of the instances the allotments did not exceed a quarter of an acre; whereas this Bill sought to allow one acre arable, or three acres pasture, so as to enable the labourers to eke out the scanty earnings on which they had to live, and bring up their families in decency and comfort. The objection was raised that voluntary effort was willing to do all this. His answer was that the principle of compulsion would never be applied if voluntary effort did its work. They were anxious that the labourer should have his acre of arable land, or three acres of pasture, under conditions which would give him security of tenure, and make him thoroughly independent both of landlord and farmer. But the power of acquiring land for the purpose of restoring the agricultural labourer to the soil was not compulsory on Local Authorities, but was permissive to them. They would not buy land if there was no desire nor demand for that land. If voluntary effort were sufficient the demand would never arise, so that hon. Members who believed that voluntary effort was capable of doing all that was required had no need to oppose the Bill. The principle of the Bill had been on the Statute Book for 65 or 70 years. It was a principle which could be applied without hardship and without injustice; for certain clauses of the Bill recognized, most tenderly and thoughtfully, the interests of the owner of the soil. It proposed to take no land except under conditions which were necessary to the welfare of the community. The interests of the community demanded that in certain cases there should be individual sacrifice for the common good; but by these thoughtful clauses of the Bill it was arranged that any compulsory purchase of land should be made as tenderly and carefully as possible with regard to the owner's interests. He believed the Bill had been skilfully drawn, but he did not contend that it was perfect. It had been drawn with an earnest desire to help a long-suffering and patient class of the community, who, at the end of a long life of incessant toil, found, under existing conditions, no refuge but a pauper home, or a pauper's grave. This was a state of things which was a disgrace to our legislation, and a scandal to our civilization. It was not beyond the intelligence and ability of the House to make the Bill perfect in the interests of the class in whose cause he asked them now, on grounds higher than Party politics, to read it a second time.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester), in seconding the Motion, expressed himself gratified at being able, as a new Member, to make his first speech in the House of Commons in support of the long-suffering and patient class his hon. Friend had referred to. While not endorsing every word or clause of the Bill, he was prepared to stand by the great principle contained in the 40th and 41st clauses, that principle being summed up in the one word "compulsion." There was hardly an hon. Member sitting on the other side of the House—certainly not one representing an agricultural constituency—who would say he was not thoroughly in favour of the allotment system. The book recently published by Lord Onslow contained evidence enough of the general interest—the newly-found interest in many cases—taken in the question. It had been shown again and again that the giving of access to allotment land was of the greatest benefit to the agricultural labourer. The question to what extent these allotments were necessary was a matter of detail. The principle of the Bill, which alone he urged upon the acceptance of the House, was that it was for the well-being of the country—of the agricultural labourer, of the farmer, and of the landowner—that this question should be settled by giving every agricultural labourer access to a sufficient quantity of land for his wants. In a debate at the opening of the Session the late Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster spoke of the poor labourers with 12*s.* a-week, and the hon. Member who moved the second reading had also spoken of 12*s.* a-week as their normal wages. He begged to say that in the case of a very large proportion of the parishes in East Gloucestershire wages were not 12*s.*, but only 9*s.* a-week. He had read in that morning's papers lines which might fitly be applied as an epitaph to an agricultural labourer—

"Here lies a poor fellow who always was tired,
But he lived in a world where much was required.
Weep not for me when death doth us sever,
For I am going to do nothing, for ever and ever."

Was it wonderful that this was the tone of a great many in this country? ["Oh, oh!"] Hon. Members might say "Oh, oh!" but he should like to see them live on 9*s.* a-week. He wished to do something to improve the position of that class, and give them some chance in life; and nothing could be done which would help them so much as by giving them land in the manner proposed by the Bill. It had been acknowledged from the Front Bench opposite that agricultural wages were more likely to decrease than to increase. That was the way in which the labourers themselves wished their position to be improved, and the man who wore the shoe ought to know best where it pinched. Compulsion was necessary in order to make evil men do what good men willingly did at present. The condition of the labourers had been slightly improved by their possession of the franchise, and in Gloucestershire there were allotment tenants who paid at the rate of £9 per acre before the General Election, and £7 10*s.* now. Even the latter figure, however, was altogether in excess of the agricultural value of the land. Over nearly the whole of Lord Eldon's property men were paying 50*s.* and 60*s.* an acre for allotment land of the same character as had been recently let at 12*s.* and 15*s.* an acre. He had 73 answers to inquiries he had sent out, and he found that in hardly a single case was the land let at the agricultural rent. He asked —Was this fair? Was it the way to encourage men? In the name of the agricultural labourers, he prayed the House not to raise any difficulties to the second reading of the Bill. Let Members amend it in Committee as much as they liked; but let them make one step to show that that House was in earnest in taking up the cause of the agricultural labourer. With regard to the element of compulsion, it was necessary, because without it the Act would be a piece of waste paper.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Dr. Foster.*)

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said, he believed the House would unanimously agree in the sympathy which had been expressed for the condition of the agricultural labourer at the present time. He wished, however, that the Mover and Seconder had given the House some explanations with regard to the details of their Bill, which appeared to be a measure of a very remarkable character. He sympathized as much as the hon. Members could do with the lowness of wages which labourers were receiving at the present time; but what was it owing to? It was owing to the unfortunate depression in agriculture, brought about largely by the great foreign competition which it had to encounter. With the permission of the House, he wished to say a few words both upon the object which the hon. Members had in view as well as upon the machinery by which they hoped to give effect to it. Now, both hon. Members had spoken as if the Bill dealt with allotments alone, whereas it dealt with small holdings on the one hand, and with allotments on the other. As far as allotments were concerned, he had no opposition whatever to offer to any legitimate scheme by which a large extension of the system throughout the country might be brought about. The hon. Member would find before many months were over, from the Returns now being obtained, that probably allotments existed already in far greater number than he supposed. Allotments, however, were one thing, but small holdings were another; and he was not prepared to give his consent to any legislation whatever by which the burden of the provision for an indefinite number of small holdings, which under the Bill might be as large as 40 acres, and an indefinite number of tenants was to be thrown upon the rates and ratepayers. No doubt the principle of compulsory acquisition of land had often enough been recognized in legislation; but the Bill enabled the Local Authority to take and purchase any land at a price which was to be fixed independently of the owners and by somebody else altogether. He would not call this by any such name as confiscation, or robbery, or spoliation, because he did not think that it was necessarily any of these; but it was indispensable to show that the purpose for which the land was wanted was a good one. Now, as regarded small holdings, they had never proved, and he did not think they would ever prove, anything of the kind. It was not, therefore, on the ground of confiscation or spoliation that he was opposed to the Bill, but on totally different grounds. He opposed the proposal, first, because he held that at the present time compulsion for the purpose of creating small holdings was altogether unnecessary; and, secondly, because he believed it to be an impracticable and unworkable proposal, and one which would be injurious to the interests of the very people whom it was proposed to benefit. As everybody knew, there was an enormous quantity of land in the market which the owners were only too keenly anxious to sell; and, that being so, where was the necessity for compulsion? He maintained that the scheme would not answer, and that it would be injurious to the very people themselves. Why? The land was to be bought and paid for. But how was the land to be paid for? Out of the rates. Well, what would probably happen? He would assume that the holding, having been bought and paid for out of the rates, was sold again or relet in the way proposed in the Bill. Suppose there was a succession of bad seasons, and a further fall in the prices of agricultural produce—which a great many people told him must be contemplated—what would happen then? There would happen what had constantly happened in the past. A great many of the new tenants would find that through no fault of their own, they had nothing whatever with which to pay rent. What would the unfortunate men, who had nothing to pay the interest due to the Local Authority, wish to do under those circumstances? Would they wish to seek out the landlord, who might happen to be of a warm-hearted and generous disposition—although the Radical Party seemed to think there were no landlords of that description, who might have lived upon the same estate all his life, and whose forefathers for many generations had retained the respect and affection of their tenantry? Or would these unfortunate men prefer to lay their distress before the parish Board? Hon. Members could not doubt what choice the tenants would make. He was opposed to the creation of small holdings in the manner proposed by the Bill—first, because he believed compulsion to be unnecessary for that purpose; and, secondly, because he believed the scheme of the Bill to be impracticable, and one which, for the reasons he had given, was not likely to work for the benefit of the persons it was desired to assist. Allotments, in his opinion, stood on a different footing altogether. He believed that to place within the reach of every labouring man the possibility of obtaining within a reasonable distance of his home, or, better still, immediately around it, a convenient piece of land for an allotment was, probably, the most substantial boon that, under all the circumstances, could be conferred upon him at the present moment. He was in favour of securing to every agricultural labourer throughout the country the means of obtaining such an allotment for himself. The size of the allotment he would not specify. That was a matter of detail. Some people thought that a quarter of an acre was as much as a labourer could cultivate. The Bill proposed that it should be an acre; but, without wishing to dogmatize, he might say that it seemed to him that an acre was too large to be an allotment and too small to be more than an allotment. Probably, on the whole, half an acre would be the best size, though he should defer his judgment on the matter. He saw no difficulty whatever in providing these allotments, because it was undoubtedly to the interests of the landlords of the country that it should be done. He was not aware that there would be the slightest opposition offered to it on their part. It must be to the interests of the landlords, as well as of the community at large, that the great population which lived upon the soil should be happy and contented, and he could not imagine for a moment that the smallest opposition would be offered by the landlords to a scheme of this kind. So strongly was he of this opinion that, speaking for himself, he might say that in case this could not be accomplished without compulsory measures, he should not be afraid to resort to legislative compulsion. But compulsion should be the last resort, in his opinion; and his complaint as regarded this Bill was that compulsion was the one thing of all others put in the foreground from beginning to end. It gave little option to the landlords, but empowered the Local Authority, whether the landlords were willing to sell or not, to adopt compulsory measures at any moment they pleased. The late Secretary for Scotland made an observation to which he attached a good deal of importance. He said that compulsion was desirable to the extent to which it encouraged voluntary effort. If it became necessary to introduce a compulsory measure that was the test that he should like to see applied to it. He had now explained pretty fully to the House his views on the subject of allotments, and he had shown that he appreciated entirely the motives in which, for the interests of the rural population, this measure was proposed, and he sympathized very largely with the objects that they had in view, and which he understood to be the amelioration of the condition of the agricultural labourers of this country. But he must speak in very different terms of the machinery by which it was proposed to carry those objects into effect. The Mover and Seconder, who were responsible for this Bill, had said nothing about its details; but his examination of the Bill convinced him it was one of the most remarkable legislative enactments he had ever seen. For instance, Clause 4 provided that it should be lawful for any Local Authority to sell to any person a small holding on certain terms. It seemed to be forgotten that the Local Authority had first to purchase the small holding before it could sell it. Nothing was said about the Local Authority purchasing until the 40th clause. In another clause the purchaser of a small holding was not only not required to pay more than a quarter of the purchase money down, but he was absolutely precluded by the terms of the Bill from ever discharging the debt remaining. The first effect of that extraordinary provision would be to maintain in perpetuity that dual ownership of land to which he had always taken great exception, and the mischief attending which had been amply proved by recent experience in Ireland. Her Majesty's Government was credited by rumour with intending shortly to introduce a measure to remedy the evils of dual ownership in Ireland. Of course, high rent must always be paid in the shape of the interest upon the purchase money which remained over upon the holding. In connection with this matter there was a curious inconsistency in Clause 5, which provided that the Local Authority might make loans to the holder of any small holding for buildings, and any other improvements. The Bill stated that the first condition of making loans on a small holding was that it should be free from mortgage, after having previously declared that three-fourths of the purchase money should remain as a charge on the holding for ever. Clause 4 displayed the most remarkable differences of treatment between ordinary existing owners of land and owners who had purchased their land under the Bill from any Local Authority. If the owner who had purchased from the Local Authority was for any purpose dispossessed by the Local Authority, he was to receive most exceptional treatment, including 10 per cent compensation for compulsory sale, and allowances for inconvenience and disturbance. On the other hand, the owners of the land purchased by the Local Authority were only to receive such price as would be given by a willing purchaser to a willing vendor without any compensation for compulsory sale or inconvenience. He was at a loss to understand why this difference should be made between one owner and the other. More strange than anything else was the power contained in Clause 6, which he understood to mean that if by mistake a Local Authority bought from one man property which might turn out in reality to belong to another, then the real owner, if he came forward, was not to have the land restored to him, however good his title, but to receive a certain amount of compensation for damages. Then there was Clause 7, which contained a principle which he should never have expected from the nine names which were on the back of the Bill. There was not one of those hon. Gentlemen who at some time or another had not denounced the principle of primogeniture. The principle of primogeniture was that the whole real estate on an intestacy should go to the eldest son. But the Bill went further, for it absolutely compelled the owner to make an eldest son, whether he liked it or not. He was not to dispose of his holding except in one of three ways—(1) by registered mortgage of the entire holding; (2) by registered transfer of it; or (3) by devise to one person of the whole estate. If that was not making an eldest son, what was? Then there was Clause 40, which, after all, was one of the main clauses of the Bill, under which powers of compulsory purchase were given to the Local Authorities. It could not be complained of that clause that its terms were not sufficiently wide. Any Local Authority might purchase or take on lease or by way of sale or exchange any lands, whether situate within or without their district. The first thing that occurred to him was this—when he remembered who was the author of the Bill, he began to fear that the Corporation of Birmingham might insist upon purchasing the whole of the small property which he happened to possess in Lincolnshire. There was absolutely nothing to prevent the Corporations of Liverpool, Manchester, or Birmingham purchasing any land in any part of the country, unless he had misread the Bill. When it was remembered that the favourite doctrine of the authors of the Bill was that the population should be restored to the soil, that was probably their meaning. There was, however, this limitation—the landlords might save the houses. The Local Authority might consider, under Sub-section 2, the amenities and conveniences of the owner's property. So far as practicable they were to avoid interference with "the parks, mansions, dwellings, labourers' cottages, labourers' allotments, gardens," &c. But suppose they did not, in their wisdom, find it practicable, then the landlords had no protection. The next clause seemed to contemplate farming on a gigantic scale by the Local Authorities. They had power to improve any land. They might improve any amount of land not belonging to them. They might enter upon drainage works, irrigation, embankment works, the strengthening of fences, reclamation of land, make watercourses and gardens, village greens, carry out the construction or enlargement of any of such works, &c. What opportunities were thus opened up for waste and jobbery, for mismanagement and unlimited expenditure in these gigantic undertakings! There was only one possible safeguard. Fortunately, the Bill had not taken powers to borrow money from anybody. The Local Authorities were dependent entirely upon whatever they might get from the Treasury. By Clause 48 the Treasury might from time to time make advances out of moneys supplied under any Act of Parliament of such moneys as might be deemed expedient. That was a considerable safeguard. Moreover, he did not think any Treasury in this country would be guilty of the supreme folly of advancing a sixpence for such purposes. He hoped he had made it perfectly clear that there was no lack of sympathy whatever for the agricultural labourers of this country on his side of the House. He did not know what course the Government were going to take; but he had the intention of introducing a Bill on the subject himself, so that his views should not be open to misapprehension. While they were not prepared to sanction legislation for the purpose of creating holdings of 40 acres and less wholesale throughout the country by burdens imposed on the rates, they were ready to give every legitimate facility and encouragement to the creation of allotments on the widest and most extensive scale. But when he considered the machinery by which it was by the Bill proposed to carry out such a scheme he must oppose it himself, and he hoped his hon. Friends would do the same.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): I desire to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman upon the progress which he has made upon this subject in the course of the last two months. The speech he made from that Box is very different from the one which he delivered from this Box two months ago. It differs in this respect. The speech delivered two months ago, we all remember, was an emphatic "No."

MR. CHAPLIN: It was am emphatic "No" to a Vote of Censure, and to nothing else.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The emphatic "No" was accompanied, if I remember right, by very able arguments — the right hon. Gentleman's arguments are always very able — against the whole Bill advocated by the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Jesse Collings). Well, I describe the speech to-day not as an emphatic "No," but an ambiguous "No," to the proposals in this Bill. The early part of the speech was in favour of the principle of the Bill. The latter part of the speech was rather like the old description of a mermaid, which ended rather with the tail of the ancient fish with which we were formerly familiar. But what does the right hon. Gentleman say in the earlier part of his speech? Of course, he is in favour of improving the wages of the agricultural labourer. We all are; but his method is one with which we are familiar. He says the low wages of the agricultural labourer are due to foreign competition. Oh, yes; but there were low wages when there was no foreign competition, and what was the state of the labourers' wages then? Do you think you are going to the agricultural labourers of England and tell them that they had better wages under the old system of Protection? There was a former Colleague of the right hon. Gentleman in Lincolnshire, who is not now a Member of this House, who preached that doctrine a little higher than the right hon. Gentleman. But it did not commend itself to the agricultural labourers of Lincolnshire.

MR. CHAPLIN: What were the wages 10 years ago?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: What were the wages 40 years ago? But I will not follow that argument, for time is pressing, and I shall not follow the example of the right hon. Gentleman in occupying so much precious time by a Committee argument of detail, which took up more than half his speech, and which has nothing whatever to do with the principle of the present Bill. The principle of the Bill is to give to local communities power to hire land, which land shall be employed for two purposes —either as small holdings or as allotments. The right hon. Gentleman objects altogether to small holdings——

MR. CHAPLIN: You have misunderstood me. What I said was, that I objected to small holdings the provision or burden of which was to be thrown on the rates and on the ratepayers.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I quite understand that. But what in the world does it signify? If small holdings are a good thing, and if allotments are a good thing, why should not both be provided? But it is said that the ratepayers will have to bear the burden of providing both the small holdings and the allotments. But who are the ratepayers? Why, they are the people of the community, and it is they who will have to judge whether or not it is a good thing for themselves and for the people among whom they live to have these allotments. The right hon. Gentleman opposite appears to look upon the ratepayers as something quite distinct from the community; but they are the people who will have to bear the burden, and who will have to be the judges in the matter. Then I go back upon the argument of the right hon. Gentleman as to the principle of the Bill; and in doing so I omit, for the moment, all reference to the argument whether small holdings are a good thing or not. For my own part, I think they are. I was brought up in a Northern parish, where every labourer had his three acres and a cow, and a very good thing it was; and I am very sorry to say that here I find, in the South, parish after parish where the children cannot get even a drink of milk, because the farmers will not sell it. In Yorkshire —I am sorry to say that I am speaking of some 45 years ago—every labourer had his grass plot and his cow; but things are very different in the South at the present time. The right hon. Gentleman says that he is in favour of allotments. Well, that is something. But how are they to be obtained? The right hon. Gentleman says that there are enough of them at present.

MR. CHAPLIN: I did not say that.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Then the right hon. Gentleman does not think that there are enough of them. If there are not enough of them, why are there not enough? For generations there have been landlords, and there have been people who want allotments; and yet there are not enough of them. Why is that? It is because the voluntary efforts have failed. Then comes the question of compulsion, and the right hon. Gentleman does not deny that compulsion is necessary.

MR. CHAPLIN: What I said was that I did not desire compulsion, but that I was not afraid of it.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman says that he does not desire compulsion, but that he is not afraid of it — that is the ambiguous "No." Two months ago the right hon. Gentleman was afraid of compulsion, and now he is not. I say that if there were not as many allotments as were wished, and if voluntary means hitherto had not supplied them, there must be compulsion somewhere. And to whom were the powers of compulsion to be given? Why, to the community who bore the burden; and surely they may be trusted to prevent their money from being wasted if compulsion is adopted. [*A laugh.*] Why not? Why should the ratepayers desire that the expenditure which will fall on themselves should be wasteful and oppressive? I cannot understand the argument of the right hon. Gentleman at all. If the right hon. Gentleman is really in favour of allotments, and is not afraid of compulsion, and if he admits that the community is, or might be, the proper body to provide land which should be laid out in allotments for the good of the labouring poor, why is he against the principle of this Bill? In Committee he can propose to deal with the clauses regarding small holdings and with the clauses regarding compulsion if he is not satisfied with them, but these have nothing to do with the principle of the Bill; and therefore, as regards that principle, I take it that it is that the community should have power, under proper restrictions, to acquire land for these purposes. I have, at the present moment, neither time nor inclination to criticize the details of this measure. In my opinion, a measure of this importance ought to be in the hands of the Government, and its principles ought to be, and will be, dealt with in any measure of local self-government which may be introduced by Her Majesty's Government. With regard to the financial proposals of the Bill, I think that if I had time I might offer some criticisms upon them from the Treasury point of view; but I shall not be seduced into doing so at the present moment even by the example of the right hon. Gentleman. The question is, are we to say "Aye" or "No" to the principle of allowing land to be acquired for this purpose? Speaking for myself, I am in favour of the principle of this measure, although I do not desire such a Bill to be in the hands of a private Member. It is a Bill for which the responsibility ought to rest with the Government; but I can tell the right hon. Gentleman opposite, when he makes an attack upon the principle of this measure, I shall take exactly the opposite course with regard to it which he has indicated he intends to take.

Mr. AMBROSE, who rose amid loud cries of "Divide," said, he repudiated the claim of hon. Members opposite to figure as the only champions of the agricultural labourer. This measure was intended as a colourable fulfilment of the pledges which hon. Members opposite had given during the General Election to provide the agricultural labourer with three acres and a cow. He had gone carefully through the Bill, and he could find in it neither the three acres nor the cow for the agricultural labourer, nor for any of the classes for whose benefit the Bill was intended.

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

——o——

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Shiress Will, Bill to amend the provisions of "The Education (Scotland) Act, 1872," with regard to Voting at Elections of School Boards, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Shiress Will and Mr. Eugene Wason.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 159.]

RELIGIOUS PROSECUTIONS ABOLITION BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to abolish prosecutions against laymen for the expression of opinion on matters of religion.

Resolution *reported:*—Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Courtney Kenny, Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Crossley, and Mr. Illingworth.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 160.]

House adjourned at ten minutes
before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 1*st April*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 3) (48); Trees (Ireland) (42).

Referred to a Select Committee—Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 1) (25); Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 2) (40); Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 3) (48).

Third Reading — Justices Jurisdiction* (43); Law of Evidence Amendment (44), and *passed.*

NEW PEERS.

The Right Honourable Richard de Aquila Grosvenor (commonly called Lord Richard de Aquila Grosvenor), having been created Lord Stalbridge of Stalbridge in the county of Dorset—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

The Right Honourable William Baron Kensington in that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland, having been created Baron Kensington of Kensington in the county of Middlesex—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE — GREECE AND TURKEY—THE RUSSIAN FLEET.

QUESTION.

Viscount CRANBROOK asked the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he had anything to communicate to the House with respect to the reported departure of the Russian Fleet from Suda Bay?

The SECRETARY of STATE (The Earl of Rosebery): I understand that orders will be at once given, if they have not been already given, for the Russian Fleet to return to Suda Bay. I also understand that the Russian Fleet only left the Bay for the purpose of revictualling. I may add that Her Majesty's Government have received the most cordial assurances of co-operation from the Russian Government in this matter.

LAW OF EVIDENCE AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 44.)

(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3ª."—(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

Lord DENMAN said, he had a Notice on the Paper to move the rejection of the Bill. He hoped it was not unseemly in him to oppose a Bill which had been so often carried in their Lordships' House, and which was nearly being referred to a Grand Committee in "another place." Such Committees, however, were devices of the last Parliament. He had great respect for the noble and learned Lord (Lord Bramwell), who was not called to the Bar till he was 30 years of age; and before 1838, for six years he (Lord Denman) had the advantage of hearing Sir James Scarlett and Sir John Campbell; two Sir Fredericks — Pollock and Thesiger—one grave, the other gay; and two Sir Williams—Erle and Follett—and they were often on different sides, and one must have been wrong. The Bill was faulty in every way—notwithstanding the amelioration by the Amendment reported. He believed the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition opposed the principle of the Bill, when he said, in this House, that he should attach no importance whatever to evidence extorted by interrogations by police officers. He thought it might amuse their Lordships to quote from *The Critic; or, A Tragedy Rehearsed* (by Sheridan), the significancy of the mode of entrance of the ancestor of the noble Marquess—

> "*Puff*—I only hope the Lord High Treasurer is perfect - if he is but perfect.
>
> "(*Enter* Lord Burleigh, *goes slowly to a chair and sits.*)
>
> "*Sneer*—Mr. Puff.
>
> "*Puff*—Hush! vastly well, Sir! vastly well! a most interesting gravity.
>
> "*Dangle*—What, isn't he to speak at all?
>
> "*Puff*—Egad, I thought you'd ask me that! Yes, it is a very likely thing—that a Minister in his situation, with the whole affairs of the nation on his head, should have time to talk! But hush! or you'll put him out.
>
> "*Sneer*—Put him out; how the plague can that be if he is not going to say anything.
>
> "*Puff*—There's the reason! Why, his part is to think; and how the plague do you imagine he can think if you keep talking.
>
> "*Dangle*—That's very true, upon my word.
>
> (Lord Burleigh *comes forward, shakes his head, and exit.*)
>
> "*Sneer*—He is very perfect indeed! Now, pray what did he mean by that?

> "*Puff*—You don't take it?
>
> "*Sneer*—No, I don't, upon my soul.
>
> "*Puff*—Why, by that shake of the head, he gave you to understand that even though they had more justice in their cause, and wisdom in their measures—yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people, the country would at last fall a sacrifice to hostile ambition.
>
> "*Sneer*—The devil! did he mean all that by shaking his head?
>
> "*Puff*—Every word of it—if he shook his head as I taught him."

He (Lord Denman) did not presume that he could teach the noble Marquess; but in his protest against a Bill for admitting wives as witnesses against their husbands he mentioned the present Bill which had passed this House, and deprecated the interrogation of persons on their acts by magistrates before, and by counsel on, their trials. He, perhaps, had better been silent himself; but he could not refrain from quoting the last verse of a sonnet, written in 1531, by Lord Vaux, commending silence—

"Wherefore for virtue's sake
I can be well content;
The sweetest time in all my life
To deem in thinking spent."

He would not make the Motion which stood in his name.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 3^a accordingly, and *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 3) BILL.—(No. 48.)

(*The Lord Houghton.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord HOUGHTON (for the Board of Trade), in moving that the Bill be read the second time, said, that when the two previous Bills on this subject were before the House he had stated that it was the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill of their own. The Bill only consisted of one clause. By the present law the ordinary course was for a Company to apply to the Board of Trade for a Provisional Order, which was given for a term of 21 years, at the end of which, or at the end of any subsequent period of seven years, the Local Authority was empowered to buy the undertaking on certain terms. The present Bill proposed to extend the period of 21 years to 30 years, and it provided that if the consent of the Local Authorities was obtained at the time of applying for the Order the term might be increased to 42 years. Then, at the end of every 10 years, the purchasing powers of the Local Authority might be exercised. He should, however, be willing to add a clause leaving it to the discretion of the Board of Trade to increase the term to 40 years. In case the Local Authorities declined to assent to the longer term, they would be required to state the grounds of their refusal in writing. It was the firm belief of the Government that this Bill would satisfy those who desired to promote electric light undertakings. He might mention that a Company at Chelsea had offered to undertake electric lighting in that district if they were permitted to take advantage of any legislation which the Government might pass.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Lord Houghton.*)

Viscount BURY said, that the Bill was in the right direction, and he would offer no objection to the second reading.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN said, he had no objection to the second reading, as, no doubt, some modification of the existing law was required. But the Board of Trade were thoroughly justified in taking every precaution that the public should not be exposed to losses in respect of electric lighting similar to those which they had incurred with respect to gas and water. The compensation to be given to Companies at the end of the terms should be of a fixed amount. Whilst the Government extended the period to 30 years, they did not deal with that part of the principle of the Act of 1882 which enacted that no extra compensation should be given on account of the compulsory purchase. He doubted very much whether the method proposed by the Government was the best one, or the only one which could be adopted.

Lord RAYLEIGH said, he had no objection to the second reading, as the Bill was some improvement on the existing law. But no mere extension of time would meet the requirements of the case if the very stringent terms of purchase now imposed were not modified, and if no compensation were to be allowed in respect of goodwill or profit. During the last years of the term the enterprize would suffer greatly from the difficulty of carrying out improvements and maintaining the plant in order.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 1) BILL.

(No. 25.) (*The Lord Rayleigh.*)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

(No. 40.) (*The Viscount Bury.*).

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 3) BILL.

(No. 48.) (*The Lord Houghton.*)

BILLS REFERRED TO A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Viscount BURY, in rising to move that these three Bills be referred to a Select Committee, said, that the Act of 1882 had been found to be insufficient. But no mere extension of time would be sufficient. He understood that the Government would not be averse to extend the period of 30 years to 40 years; but the mere extension of time was not sufficient for the equitable dealing with the matter. At the end of the period, whatever it was, the plant of the undertakings would be sold as old iron. He did not believe anyone would invest their money under such circumstances. At all events, the best course would clearly be to refer the three Bills to a Select Committee. He belonged to a society which comprised distinguished men of science like Sir W. Thompson and men who were acquainted with the practical application of science like Mr. Preece, of the Post Office, and which might, in distinction from the purely scientific and commercial aspects of the question, be fairly said to represent educated public opinion on the subject. It was most important that the evidence of such persons should be taken, and clearly the best way of dealing with the question was to refer the three Bills to a Select Committee. He thought that the Bill which he had the honour to introduce dealt with the subject in a much simpler manner. It provided that electricity should be supplied by meter, and that the Company should not interfere with the manner in which the user of electricity chose to use the electric energy placed at his disposal. There was hardly any limit, he might observe, to the ways in which electricity might be used, and more than one meter had been found which was accepted by electricians as efficient. These were matters, however, for expert evidence, and they could be discussed far better before a Committee than by talking about a Bill over their Lordships' Table. This was one reason why he thought all these Bills should be referred to a Select Committee. If his noble Friend's Bill, as it stood, became law, it would be impossible to get capitalists to embark a sufficient amount of money in the undertaking with any fair prospect of success. His noble Friend opposite stated that there were some purveyors of electricity who were willing to come under the terms of his Bill. It might be so; but he would venture to express his belief that the terms would not be sufficiently attractive. His own Bill differed in one respect from that of his noble Friend behind him, who proposed that electricity should be put upon the same footing as gas, and that there should be no fixed date at which the concerns should be handed over to the Local Authority, but that, like Gas Companies, they should be perpetual, and that only their dividends should be restricted. His scheme was that at the end of 40 years the Local Authorities should, if they so desired, have a power of coming in and buying the concern at a fair price as a going concern. The noble Lord concluded by moving that the three Bills be referred to a Select Committee.

Moved, "That the Bills be referred to a Select Committee."—(*The Viscount Bury.*)

Lord GRIMTHORPE said, that the question was whether Municipal Bodies were to be authorized, at the end of some period which was only to be determined by the Government Bill, to buy the undertakings of Electric Light Companies for something less than they were worth. Was the Corporation of any town to be allowed to buy a going concern for something less than it was worth from those who had had the risk of starting it and keeping it going? In support of that proposition he had heard nothing, except that the Corporations would like it. No doubt they would like to have the same power with regard to railways and gas and water. It was entirely uncertain whether Electric Lighting Companies would be financially successful or not; but although their success was uncertain, and hitherto none had succeeded, the House was asked to give Corporations the opportunity of playing the game of "Heads I win, tails you loose." If the Companies paid and became prosperous the Corporations would buy them; if not, they would leave them alone. He would admit that the Companies ought not to receive the extra price allowed by surveyors for compulsory purchase, usually 10 to 20 per cent. The noble Lord had mentioned offering to light Chelsea on whatever might turn out to be the final terms of the Government Bill. He should like to know what they could not get an offer for? In his experience he generally found that the highest offer was the worst bargain; and he was convinced that if they hampered undertakings in the manner proposed that it would only tend to bring financially weak, incompetent Companies into existence; that these Companies would do their work badly, especially during the latter years over which the order extended; and that they would be giving Local Bodies a right which not even the State had ever before enjoyed, even over Companies whose success was certain if they were properly managed, and he was convinced that such a power ought not to be granted.

Lord HOUGHTON (for the Board of Trade) said, that the question whether the Bills should be referred to a Select Committee rested entirely with their Lordships' House. If he were right in supposing that the Government Bill would be satisfactory to the promoters of electric light undertakings, it did not seem to him, under those circumstances, that there was any reason for sending it to a Select Committee. The whole of this subject was threshed out thoroughly before a Select Committee of the other House in 1882, and a most voluminous Report was made. All the technical questions to which the noble Viscount had referred were then thoroughly gone into, and if another Committee were appointed the same evidence would have to be taken. He did not think that the result would be to place the Committee in possession of any new scientific or commercial fact upon the subject. Moreover, to send the Bills before a Select Committee would be practically to prevent any legislation taking place before the end of next Session.

Lord BRAMWELL said, that in his opinion these Bills ought to be referred to a Select Committee. He did not wish to find the least fault with those who were responsible for the original Act, by which the Electric Light Companies were given a lease for 21 years. No doubt the authors of that Act were actuated by the best possible motives, and were solely desirous of making the best bargain for the public with the people who embarked their capital in these undertakings. In attempting to make a good bargain for the public in 1882 the Government offered such terms as positively no one would accept. He believed that there had been one application only—he was not quite certain that there had been even one—for a Provisional Order under the Act of 1882. That this was the case was not surprising. If at the end of 21 years the undertakers were bound to sell their property, not, perhaps, at the price of old iron, but for its value as it stood, capitalists would not embark their money in the undertaking. It might very well be that after struggling against difficulties for many years, just as a Company had overcome them and were but beginning to be able to pay a reasonable dividend upon their shares their terms of concession would expire, and the Local Authority would step in, and, being able to borrow money at 4 per cent, would buy them out. The proposal contained in this Bill was that the term of concession should be 30 years, or, with the consent of the Local Authority, 40 years.

Lord HOUGHTON said, that in the event of the Local Authority objecting to an extension of the term the Board of Trade would be empowered to extend it to 40 years, or longer, with the approval of Parliament.

Lord BRAMWELL said, that in 1882 the Government had only offered half the advantages to a Company that they did now; but he was positively assured that even the terms now offered were so bad that even under the new Bill, as under the old Act, there would be no electric lighting. Confessedly 20 years was too short a time; 30 were now offered, or 40. On what information would their Lordships hold that 30 or 40 years were enough, and not too much? He did not think that their Lordships would, without further information, arrive at the conclusion that 40 years was a sufficiently long term; and, therefore, without the slightest desire to oppose their Bill, or to throw difficulties in the way of the Government, he held that it should be referred to a Select Committee.

Lord RAYLEIGH pointed out that the history of the Act of 1882 showed that the original proposal of the Board of Trade was that the term should be seven years only. That term was extended to 14 years in the House of Commons, and to 21 years by that House. Under these circumstances, it was impossible to feel much confidence that the Board of Trade had hit the exact length of term necessary for these undertakings in the present measure. The stringency of the provisions of this Bill would probably prevent the public from obtaining the benefit of electric lighting at all.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN said, he hoped that the Government would consent to their Bill being sent to the Select Committee. So many points and details had been raised during the debate that it was quite clear they could only be thus properly considered. But even a Select Committee would find it difficult to form a correct estimate of the length of the term necessary from the evidence of professional witnesses who were likely to appear upon both sides and to give evidence opposite ways with equal positiveness.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Earl Granville) remarked that the arguments which had been put forward in favour of sending this measure before a Select Committee were of a very different character. He could not, however, but perceive that the feeling of the House was in favour of a Select Committee. At the same time, both individually and on behalf of the Board of Trade, he must enter his protest. The Board of Trade were extremely anxious that this important question should be settled at once. The delay which had already occurred had been very injurious to one of the most useful inventions of late years. He entirely agreed that it would be an almost hopeless task for a Select Committee to attempt to settle the number of years' term that would induce capitalists to invest money in these undertakings. He felt convinced that if the Bill came out of the Select Committee, and was approved by their Lordships' House on the principle which had been very generally advocated that night, there was not the slightest chance of its passing through the other House of Parliament, and that the question would be indefinitely delayed. He quite admitted that it was a matter for the House itself to decide; and, as the opinion of the House seemed to be in favour of referring the Bill to a Select Committee, he could only join in the hope expressed by the noble Earl who spoke last that a conclusion might be arrived at by the Committee as soon as possible.

Viscount CRANBROOK said, he must express his gratification that the noble Earl opposite had assented to the reference of the Bill to a Select Committee. Their Lordships could have but one feeling—namely, that the question should be dealt with as speedily, and at the same time as soundly, as possible. At present there was practically a paralysis of public electric lighting. What they desired was that some means should be found by which the public of this country would more largely enjoy the benefits of that invention. While full protection was secured to the public interest, they did not wish capitalists to be deterred, as they were at present, by the conditions of the existing law.

The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES (The Earl of Redesdale) said, he would suggest that the Select Committee should be a small one.

Motion *agreed to*: Bills *referred* to a Select Committee accordingly.

TREES (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 42.)

(*The Lord President.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The LORD PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Earl Spencer), in moving that the Bill be read the second time, said, he would not delay their Lordships by explaining at any length the provisions of this measure, which had received the assent of both Parties in the other House. The Bill was not a Government measure; but as no one objected to it in the other House it was thought by the Irish Executive that, as it was a useful Bill, it was one which might very well be taken charge of by them, and he had accordingly been asked to take it in hand in their Lordships' House. The measure was for the purpose of extending the statutory powers in regard to trees which now existed in Ireland. Under an old Act of Parliament tenants for life or tenants for more than 30 years were entitled to register all trees planted by them after having first given notice to the owners of the land of their intention to do so. This Bill would extend this provision to other classes of tenants, and it also contained certain modifications of the old law. One of these was to enable the tenant ejected for the non-payment of rent to sell the trees he might have planted on the land or to get compensation for them, just in the same way as he would get compensation for certain other valuable improvements which were dealt with by the Acts of 1871 and 1881. There were also certain other modifications of the old statutes enabling the tenant acting *bonâ fide* to cut down trees himself, if he did so either before or just after receiving notice to quit. But, under certain circumstances, the landlord would have the same rights which he now enjoyed under the old Irish Acts. He did not think that he need say more on that occasion, and would content himself with moving the second reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord President.*)

The Earl of COURTOWN said, he did not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but remarked that certain parts of its provisions wore a somewhat suspicious aspect; and unless they could be satisfactorily explained he should feel disposed to move their rejection in Committee. It was somewhat remarkable that, on the eve of some great measure for the expropriation of the Irish landlords, the Government should take under their wing a Bill of this kind, which certainly did not seem to contemplate their being got rid of altogether. He quite thought that some improvement might be effected in the planting of trees in Ireland; but he certainly could not see why a tenant ejected for non-payment of rent should be placed on the same footing as the men who paid their rent, and that he also should be allowed to go on the land for twelve months after he had been ejected for the purpose of cutting the trees down. There were other portions of the Bill which he did not quite understand.

The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES (The Earl of Redesdale) said, he would point out that the Bill would require a considerable amount of attention from their Lordships in Committee, especially in regard to the permission to be given to the tenants to cut down trees—a power which needed very careful guarding. As their Lordships were aware, if these trees were of considerable growth the mere cutting down would not suffice. The roots might be left in the ground, and the undergrowth which would in a short time appear would be of considerable injury to the land, which, so far as farming purposes were concerned, might, until great expense had been incurred, be practically valueless for agricultural purposes.

The Earl of LIMERICK said, he hoped that some interval would be allowed to take place before the Committee stage was taken. In common with his noble Friend (the Earl of Courtown) he did not quite understand the exact bearing of the 3rd sub-section of Clause 3 or Clause 4, and they ought to have the opportunity of consulting with gentlemen in Ireland on the effect of those clauses. The question was one of some importance, considering that each tenant was to be allowed to plant as he liked, and that his planting was to be considered as improvements to the land. Trees, as a rule, were many years in arriving at maturity; and, although compensation was to be given, they might be rather a detriment to the land than an improvement.

Motion *agreed to:* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* the 12*th of April* next.

POST OFFICE—THE METROPOLITAN POLICE—THE TELEGRAPHS.

QUESTION.

Earl FORTESCUE asked, Whether Her Majesty's Government had made any arrangements for giving officers of the Metropolitan Police authority, on their responsibility, to order the telegraphists at postal telegraphic offices to clear the line at once for urgent messages to Scotland Yard, as recommended by the Committee of Inquiry into the Metropolitan disturbances on the 8th of February last?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Lord Wolverton): In conjunction with the Secretary of State for the Home Department, I arranged some weeks ago for the provision of direct wires from the Central Telegraph Office into Scotland Yard. All the telegraph offices in the Metropolitan district, numbering about 400, have direct communication with the Central Telegraph Office, and by means of the wires to Scotland Yard a message handed in by the police at any one of these 400 offices would secure very prompt transmission to headquarters. Instructions have also been issued authorizing the acceptance of the police messages without prepayment, and every care will be taken that no time is lost in dealing with the messages.

House adjourned at Six o'clock,
till To-morrow, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 1*st April*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Private Bill (*by Order*) — *Second Reading*—Portsmouth and Hayling Railway.

Public Bills — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment* [161]; Prevention of Hydrophobia * [162].

Second Reading—Poor Relief (Ireland) * [155]; Cape Race Lighthouse * [152]; Prison Officers' Superannuation [154].

Committee—Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) [118] [*Second Night*]—r.p ; Copyhold Enfranchisement [26]—r.p.

QUESTIONS.

THE CIVIL SERVANTS OF THE CROWN —PRIVATE TRADING.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Her Majesty's Government still feel themselves unable to establish any general rules to restrict, within fitting bounds, the permanent Civil Servants of the Crown, paid to serve the State, from devoting their time and their energies to making money by private avocations, and by accepting appointments from Companies and private firms, in addition to those they hold from the State, especially in the case of the higher Civil Servants, who regulate their own office hours and times of attendance?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby), in reply, said, the disadvantage of the practice was obvious. It was equally certain that it was very difficult to lay down an absolute rule which would apply to all cases. He found that, especially among the humbler classes of the Civil Servants, there was a very great objection to their being prevented from taking part in business, especially like the co-operative business, throughout the country, in which they were largely engaged. It was not the intention, and it would be extremely difficult, to lay down any definite rule; and, as at present advised, he saw nothing for it except to deal with particular cases as they arose where such employment seemed objectionable.

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) ACT, 1885 —OPERATION OF THE ACT.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, To what extent advantage has been taken of the Land Purchase provisions of last Session; and if he will furnish information showing what classes have had the benefit of those provisions, and, especially, whether in any cases large farmers have been allowed to avail themselves of those terms to acquire considerable estates?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): A Return will be laid upon the Table, probably to-morrow, which will give the information asked for in the first paragraph of the Question. As regards the second paragraph of the Question, I am informed that the number of loans applied for up to the present date is 1,851, of which 94 are cases of tenants who pay £100 and upwards.

In reply to a further Question,

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I think the Return will be circulated to-morrow.

IMPERIAL REVENUE, 1801-1840—PROPORTION OF TAXATION PAID BY IRELAND.

Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, What was the gross amount of Imperial

Revenue raised by taxation in Ireland for the forty years, 1801 to 1840, both inclusive; what was the gross amount of Imperial Revenue raised by taxation in Ireland for the forty years, 1841 to 1880, both inclusive; whether some and what amount of the loans made for Irish purposes during the latter period were, in 1853, avowedly remitted in consequence of the enactment of fresh taxes levied on Ireland for general Revenue; and, whether these fresh taxes have yielded to the Imperial Exchequer, Returns in cash considerably in excess of all Government Loans for Irish purposes made during the last mentioned period from 1841 to 1880, whether remitted or still outstanding?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I can hardly answer this Question, divided as it is, upon the Paper. If the hon. Member will move for a Return on the subject there will be no objection to give it to him.

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS (IRELAND) ACT, 1885—POSTAGE OF REQUISITION FORMS.

LORD ERNEST HAMILTON (Tyrone, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether complaints have reached him from various Boards of Guardians in Ireland with reference to the great expense to which the ratepayers are placed, owing to the fact that numbers of the Requisition Forms (Registration Act (Ireland), 1885), requiring the names of inhabitant occupiers, are returned to the clerk of the Union without the postage prepaid, thus putting the ratepayers to the expense of twice the deficiency of postage; and, whether, in consideration of the fact that these forms must be dealt with (under statute) by the clerk of the Union, whether returned stamped or otherwise, the Government will consider the advisability of allowing the Requisition Forms to be transmitted free through the Post Office?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): We find, Sir, in the course of this inquiry, that we are unable to raise the question without considerable legal difficulty. The matter is at present before the Law Officers of the Crown in Ireland; and when their opinion is received I will communicate with the noble Lord.

Sir Joseph M'Kenna

THE CIVIL SERVICE—GRIEVANCES OF THE WRITERS.

SIR HENRY HOLLAND (Hampstead) asked the Secretary to the Treasory, Whether the position of the Civil Service writers is now under the consideration of the Treasury; and, whether he can hold out hopes of a speedy decision upon a subject which so deeply affects a large body of deserving men?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.), in reply, said, the whole question was at present under the consideration of the Treasury, and he hoped shortly to be in a position to give a decision upon it. Under those circumstances, and considering the fact that he had only been for a period of six weeks in Office, he would ask the hon. Member for Devonport (Mr. Puleston) to postpone the Motion which he had down upon this subject for Tuesday next.

MR. PULESTON (Devonport) said, that under those circumstances he would postpone his Motion.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton) asked, whether the hon. Gentleman would also consider the case of the Inland Revenue officials?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER said, he had received a communication from the hon. Member, which was now under consideration. They were dealing with the Civil Service Lower Division; but he could make no pledge with regard to the Excise.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MR. FRANK BROOK, OF BROOKBOROUGH, CO. FERMANAGH.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What action has been taken by the Government with reference to the speech of Mr. Brook, J.P., to which attention was called in the House on the 26th inst.?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I find that there are *primâ facie* grounds for assuming that the gentleman in question made use of the language imputed to him, and I have directed the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the matter.

INLAND REVENUE — PROPERTY AND INCOME TAX—BUILDING SOCIETIES.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the

Exchequer, Whether Building Societies are compelled to allow Income Tax to their members who pay interest on money advanced on mortgage; and, whether Building Societies are exempt from payment of Income Tax; and, if they are, whether it should not be by claiming rebate from the Inland Revenue authorities, rather than by refusing to allow the amount to their members when so paying interest?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby), in reply, said, the answer to the first part of the Question was in the affirmative; and as to the second, Building Societies were not exempt from payment of Income Tax. He would refer the hon. Member for further information on the subject to an answer given by a preceding Chancellor of the Exchequer on December 4, 1884.

THE LAND COMMISSION (ENGLAND AND WALES)—ASHDOWN FOREST.

DR. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, It being a fact that the Land Commission for England are now attempting to sell to about 120 squatters on Ashdown Forest, Sussex, the small bits of land that they have reclaimed from the forest during the last 12 to 18 years, whether compensation is to be given to those squatters for their houses and reclamation of land if they are not able to buy their plots and are consequently evicted; whether he is aware that the said Commissioners demand at the rate of £50 per acre as the price of these plots, while land similar to theirs when they took possession of it was sold a few years ago to Mr. Thompson, of Ashdown Park, for £8 an acre, and which he declared at a public meeting at Netley, on Tuesday the 23rd, was dear enough at £5 an acre; whether, considering the discrepancy of £50 per acre demanded from these peasants by the Land Commissioners and £5 or even £8 per acre as paid by Mr. Thompson, he will take such steps as will prevent these people being evicted till this discrepancy is properly explained; whether, in the event of a reasonable price being fixed for those bits of land, he will also make arrangements not only as to this but as to all other commons that English peasants may be enabled to buy their lands in a manner similar to those made for Irish peasants; whether the Commissioners have interdicted these people from cutting peats in the forest (a right unquestioned till lately and rather beneficial than otherwise to the land), and in consequence they have to pay 33*s.* 4*d.* per ton for coals; whether one of those interdicted declared at the meeting referred to above that he had to pay £1 5*s.* and costs for cutting peats, being convicted by the Uckfield Bench, one of the magistrates sitting thereon being a Commissioner for the forest; and, if this be so, whether, if the fine were illegally levied, it will be repaid to the man?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I have been in communication with the Land Commissioners on the subject of my hon. Friend's Question, and am informed by them that the small bits of land referred to are recent encroachments, illegally made; and they are now being sold under the Provisional Order, confirmed by Parliament, for the regulation of Ashdown Forest as an open space. The encroachers comprise all classes, from landowners to labourers. In the event of their not being able, or willing, to buy their plots, they are entitled to such compensation as is provided by the Enclosure Acts. The price asked is the fair market price, which it is the duty of the Commissioners to obtain. It, of course, varies with the quality and convenience of the land sold. Most of the encroachers have agreed to the price asked, and are willing to buy more land at the same rate. The Commissioners have not the power to interdict people from cutting peats; but the Provisional Order, before quoted, prohibits this practice, which is damaging to the surface of the forest.

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE — GREECE AND TURKEY—THE RUSSIAN FLEET.

MR. BOURKE (Lynn Regis) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he can give the House any information with respect to the disarmament of Greece, and with respect to the future position of the Prince of Bulgaria?

MR. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleshall) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Russian Government has declined to accept the union of Eastern Roumelia and Bulgaria under Prince

Alexander for a longer period than five years; whether the Russian Government are about to withdraw their ships from the combined squadron of Suda; and what steps Her Majesty's Ministry are taking to prevent Greece from breaking the peace of Europe?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): In answer to my right hon. Friend (Mr. Bourke) and the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett), I regret that I cannot give them any information with respect to the future position of the Prince of Bulgaria, Negotiations on the subject are proceeding, but they have not arrived at a point when it would be desirable to make a statement. With respect to the disarmament of Greece, I cannot now add anything to what has appeared in the public Press as regards the attitude of the Greek Government. I may, however, say that Her Majesty's Government adhere to the engagements entered into by their Predecessors. The departure of the Russian Squadron from Suda Bay was only a temporary movement, for the purpose of obtaining provisions, and we have reason to believe that the Russian vessels will at once rejoin the Allied Squadrons.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION BILL.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he can fix the date upon which he will introduce the Police Superannuation Bill?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I had hoped to have been able to make some definite statement in answer to the hon. Member's Question; but, owing to the many details that have to be considered in connection with this measure, I cannot say more at present than that there will be no unnecessary delay in introducing the Bill. I hope to do so, at the latest, immediately after Easter.

EGYPT (FINANCE, &c.)—CONVERSION OF THE DAIRA AND DOMAIN LOANS.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Government have any information as to the proposed Conversion of the Daira and Domain debts; and, whether he can give an undertaking that no scheme for the Conversion of these debts will be sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government until this House shall have had an opportunity of forming a judgment on the matter?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): The outlines of a scheme for the conversion of the Domain and Daira Loans into a new issue of Egyptian Preference Stock have been submitted to Her Majesty's Government by Mr. Edgar Vincent, and are under examination. But the plan has not yet been worked out in any details, and is not in a condition to enable Her Majesty's Government to decide whether it is one which it is desirable to entertain. If adopted by the Egyptian Government the scheme would require the assent of the Powers —parties to the Law of Liquidation. The proposed operation is one solely for the improvement of the financial position of Egypt; it has no political significance, and would not involve any increased charge or liability for the British Exchequer; and Her Majesty's Government cannot give any pledge as to the stage in the negotiations at which they could lay the scheme before Parliament in case the proposals now under consideration should be eventually adopted.

ARMY (SOUTH AFRICA)—THE BARRACKS AT CAPETOWN.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he has received information as to the alleged sanitary state of the infantry barracks at Capetown; whether so long ago as 25th November 1885, the Royal Scots had ten cases of typhoid fever, one of which was fatal; whether, notwithstanding representations as to the state of the drains and the abundance of loathsome vermin, the regiment was kept in these barracks until the month of March; and, whether they will be put in a thoroughly sanitary state before the next occupation?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): There have been some cases of typhoid fever in the barracks at Cape Town; but, on the whole, the health of the troops has not been bad. The barracks are old, dilapidated, and quite unsuited for their purpose. It has been decided that money spent in improving the present structure would be thrown away, and such is the unhealthy condition of the neighbourhood in which the barracks are that it is not considered desirable to erect new buildings there. Under these circumstances, measures will be pushed forward for providing accommodation for the greater portion of the troops at a healthier place—probably at Wynberg. Provision for this service is made in the Estimates of the present year.

GREENWICH AGE PENSIONS—MEMORIAL OF PENSIONERS.

Sir **WILLIAM CROSSMAN** (Portsmouth) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, When a reply will be given to the memorial relative to Greenwich Age Pensions from a public meeting of Naval Pensioners at Portsmouth, and which was lately laid before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty?

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. R. W. Duff) (Banffshire): The Admiralty are giving their best attention to the various points raised in the Memorial referred to by the hon. and gallant Member. After careful consideration a reply will be sent to the Petitioners.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—ALLEGED MALPRACTICES OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE AT TRALEE.

RULES OF DEBATE—QUESTIONS.

Mr. **DE COBAIN** (Belfast, E.), who had a Notice on the Paper of his intention to put a Question to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, in reference to the action of the Mary Street Branch of the Irish National League, Tralee, on the occasion of the recent election of Poor Law Guardians for the Tralee Union, having intimated to Mr. Speaker that he did not intend putting the Question, Mr. Speaker did not call upon the hon. Gentleman, but called upon Mr. W. H. Smith (Strand, Westminster), whose name was the next on the Paper.

Mr. **T. M. HEALY** (Londonderry, S.): I rise, Sir, to a point of Order. I have received a communication on the subject of the Question of the hon. Member for East Belfast (Mr. De Cobain). I am informed that it contains serious charges against individuals which are altogether unfounded. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. **SPEAKER**: The Question to which the hon. Member refers has been passed over, and is not now before the House.

Mr. **T. M. HEALY**: What I wish, Sir, to know is, whether an hon. Member is entitled to put down upon the Notice Paper a Question involving a disgraceful—I may say an indecent—attack upon innocent persons, and then to absent himself and run away from his Question without giving the Minister to whom the Question was addressed an opportunity of replying and of clearing, in this House, the characters of the persons attacked? I wish to know, Sir, whether it will be competent for me to ask the Question of the Chief Secretary for Ireland myself?

Mr. **SPEAKER**: The Question referred to has been postponed; but it will be competent for the hon. Member, if he thinks that it contains a reflection upon the character of anybody, to ask any Question which he thinks will place the matter in a proper light before the House.

Mr. **T. M. HEALY**: That being so, I beg to ask the Question which appears upon the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for East Belfast (Mr. De Cobain).

Mr. **SPEAKER**: I must again point out that the Question upon the Paper has been postponed. If at any time subsequently it should be put, it will be open for the hon. Member to found another Question upon it.

At a later stage, after the Questions on the Paper had been gone through,

Mr. **T. M. HEALY** said, in order to test the manner in which Questions in this House are being made use of by hon. Members from the North of Ireland, I will now put to the Chief Secretary the Question which stands in the name of the hon. Member for East Belfast (Mr. De Cobain), and which is as follows:—

> "To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention had been drawn to the fact, that the Mary Street Branch of the 'Irish National League,' Tralee, on the occasion of the recent election of poor law guardians for the Tralee Union, threatened in the most serious manner any voter who would support Mr. John Dundon the Conservative candidate, and who would withhold his suffrages from Mr. William Flynn the late chairman of the Tralee Board of Guardians; whether the 'League' had supplied a large quantity of intoxicating drink to voters, and, in consequence of this, a man named

William Denny, was brought into Tralee in a state of insensibility, that Drs. Murray and Mulally were obliged to use the stomach pump, with the result that they extracted a pint and a-half of alcohol from the unfortunate man; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will take steps to set aside this election in consequence of these practices?"

My chief reason for putting the Question is that I have received communications respecting the innocent parties named in it, and upon whom most disgraceful attacks are made by the shameless statements put forward in the Question.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a Rule of this House that it is not competent for one hon. Member to put a Question which appears in the name of another hon. Member, and which that hon. Member wishes to withdraw. But I think there is great force in the protest which the hon. Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) has made, and that Questions which reflect upon the character of individuals ought not to be allowed to remain on the Paper a moment longer than is necessary. Therefore, if the Chief Secretary for Ireland chooses to reply to the Question I shall make no objection to its being put.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The police report that there is no such branch of the National League in Tralee as the Mary Street Branch; that there was no candidate named John Dundon, and that William Flynn was not a candidate. They can find no support for the statement as to drink being supplied at the election, and they say that the story about William Denny is entirely without foundation.

Mr. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether he is aware that the only William Denny in Tralee is or not a nephew of Sir William Denny, a Conservative, and of the same politics as the hon. Gentleman who gave Notice of the Question?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I really cannot answer for the genealogy of all the Dennys in Tralee.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION—SCALE OF COSTS.

Mr. W. H. SMITH (Strand, Westminster) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, If he will provide, by legislation or otherwise, for a maximum scale of costs to be incurred by the returning officer in the election of the School Board for London; that the accounts shall be rendered in detail by him to the School Board, and shall be published for the information of the ratepayers; and that a right of appeal to the Education Department against any charges that may be objected to shall be given to any vestry or other rating authority before precepts for the payment of the charges incurred are issued?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): As a period of nearly three years must elapse before a new Order in Council is issued to regulate another School Board election for London, it would be premature to consider a maximum scale of costs at the present time. A promise has already been given that the next Order in Council will require the Returning Officer to send the accounts to the School Board. Whether a right of appeal shall be given to any vestry is a subject worthy of consideration, and will be fully considered when the next Order is prepared.

CUSTOMS ESTABLISHMENTS—REDUNDANT CLERKS.

Mr. DAWSON (Leeds, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If the Secretary to the Board of Customs in 1883 informed the senior redundant clerks who had been induced to join the new Outdoor Department as First Class Examining Officers that the contemplated reduction in the Class of Surveyors would be made by dropping only one vacancy in three, so as to mitigate to some extent the injury inflicted by the partial withdrawal of the chief inducement which led to their accepting important alterations in their conditions of service; and, if it is the intention of the Board of Customs to depart from this promise?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): I have referred this Question to the Board of Customs, and am informed by them that they have inquired of their Secretary as to the communication which took place in 1883 between him and the redundant clerks as to the reduction in the number of surveyors; and he states that what he told them was that when, some years ago, large reductions had been made in some of the upper ranks in the Navy, the reductions had been gradually effected by dropping one vacancy in three, and that the Board might, perhaps, adopt some such course in dealing with the surveyors.

STATE OF IRELAND—THE LOYALIST MEETING IN CORK—ALLEGED ASSAULT ON MR. ROBERT WALSH, T.C.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, at a meeting of "Loyalists" held in the City of Cork on Friday, 27th instant, Mr. Robert Walsh, T.C., on applying for a ticket of admission, was stabbed in the face with a sword-cane, and was wounded so severely as to necessitate his being conveyed to the infirmary for surgical treatment; whether he has seen a report of the proceedings on that day in *The Cork Herald*, in which the following sentences occur:—

> "Though no resistance was offered and the attack was altogether on the part of the Orangemen, one of them deliberately drew a revolver and blazed away through Cook Street, firing three shots, and dancing through the streets like a raving maniac.
>
> "But this was not all; another of the lot drew his revolver and cried out to a solitary man in the street, and when the latter did not choose to accept the challenge of an armed lunatic, the latter said he was a coward;"

whether it is a fact that the police made no effort to discover or arrest the persons who displayed the sword-cane and revolvers, but made several charges with batons on the people, and beat many unoffending citizens who were quietly walking home; that they continued these attacks on the people until the mayor of the city interfered and checked the police in their career; and, whether, should any other similar meetings take place in the South of Ireland, he will take such steps as may be necessary to compel the police to take a proper sense of their duty by refraining from assaults on the people, and by making some efforts to arrest and prosecute those who display firearms and sword-canes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am informed, Sir, that Mr. Walsh had a ticket for this meeting, and was allowed to enter the hall, but being recognized before he had entered the room he was turned out. There was a scuffle when he was ejected, and he sustained a cut lip. No sword-cane was used, nor did Mr. Walsh obtain treatment at the infirmary, so far as the police have been able to ascertain. No harshness was used towards the crowd when the Loyalists were retiring; but two shots like those of revolvers were heard, and the officer in command sent some constables and patrol men in the direction the sounds came from, with orders to investigate the matter. Before they had proceeded very far, however, the patrol were met by the Mayor, who directed them to return. I should add that it was when things looked threatening that the Mayor attended, and at the request of the District Inspector.

Lord ERNEST HAMILTON (Tyrone, N.): I should like to ask whether any collision that occurred was not occasioned by a crowd—which, according to *The Daily Herald*, numbered 5,000 people—who, while the National Anthem was being sung inside, insulted the passers by?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I do not, I am afraid, possess local knowledge enough to answer that Question.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—LOSS OF THE "OREGON."

Sir HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he has any further information as to the cause of the disaster to the steamship *Oregon*; whether any vessel that could have come into collision with the *Oregon* is known to be missing; whether he is able, from the facts of the case, as far as they are at present ascertained, to explain how it was that a first-class steamer, constructed by eminent builders, with water-tight compartments, to prevent her in such a case from sinking, could only be kept afloat for a few hours after the injury she received; into how many water-tight compartments the *Oregon* was divided; whether their construction was considered satisfactory; and, whether steps cannot be taken to render such vessels less easily sinkable?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): Some days ago I ordered a full inquiry to be instituted into the causes of the disaster to the steamship *Oregon*; and until that inquiry is completed I think the House will agree that I should not express any opinion on the subject.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—LURGAN UNION—ALLEGED INTIMIDATION.

Mr. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he had seen the statements made in *The Northern Whig*, of 24th instant, the leading Liberal journal in the North of Ireland, respecting the recent election of Poor Law Guardians for the Lurgan Union, in which the freedom of election was seriously interfered with by the National League and the Roman Catholic Priesthood; that Catholic voters were threatened by the Priests, if they would not vote for the Nationalist candidates, they would be proclaimed non-Catholic; that the National League also used threats of a most shameful character, informing one man, a voter, that if he did not vote in obedience to their dictum, he would be denied the rites of the Church and Christian burial, and that when he would die, he would be buried like a dog; that, in another case, the League had threatened to burn the house over a voter's head if he persisted in disobedience, and that another voter was told they would put a bullet through him if he voted for a Protestant; that mobs followed the Police when distributing the papers, and a loyalist band was fired upon by the Nationalists; if he would direct the attention of the Local Government Board to these matters in order that the elections held under such circumstances might be quashed; and, if, in view of this terrorism, he would immediately take steps to introduce a similar measure to that of which notice had been given by the Right honourable gentleman the Member for Bristol, when Leader of this House, to suppress the National League in Ireland?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Sir, careful inquiry has been made into these statements quoted from *The Northern Whig*, and it cannot be ascertained that there is any truth in the allegations that persons were threatened as stated. The police, of their own knowledge, can state that no mob followed them, that no bands were out on that occasion, and that no shots were fired.

ASTISTIC COPYRIGHT—LEGISLATION.

Mr. AGNEW (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If, in the legislation which Government contemplates in regard to copyright, it is proposed to deal with the important question of artistic copyright?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Government have introduced a Bill for the purpose of giving effect to the Berne International Convention, which includes the subject of artistic copyright. They also have under consideration the introduction of a Bill dealing with the whole question of copyright, and hope soon to be in a position to make an announcement on the subject.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—DISTRESS IN CLARE ISLAND, CO. MAYO.

Mr. DEASY (Mayo, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is true that the greater number of tenants on Clare Island, county Mayo, have been served with notice of eviction; and, if it is a fact that many of those families are known by the Irish Government to be in want of the necessaries of life, and to be now in receipt of charitable relief?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am informed, Sir, that 27 processes for non-payment of rent have been served on the tenants in Clare Island, where most of the people owe large arrears. The time which has elapsed since Notice was given of the Question by the hon. Member has not been sufficient to enable me to ascertain the exact facts as to the second paragraph; but, from circumstances within the knowledge of the Government, I think it may reasonably be assumed that some of the tenants who have been processed for rent are in receipt of charitable relief. If it should prove to be really so, I must say it appears to me strange—to use no stronger term—that such a step should be resorted to at a time when the public are coming forward with subscriptions towards the relief of these same people, and when the Government have thought it incumbent upon them to bring in a measure for the same purpose.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION ACT, 1879.

Sir JOHN GORST (Chatham) (for Sir Richard Webster) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, How it is that the consolidated forms under "The Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879," have not yet been issued, and to inform the House when they will be issued; whether on the 28th November 1882, in reply to a question by the honourable Member for Warwick, Sir W. Harcourt, Home Secretary, stated that delay had arisen, and that the Lord Chancellor had issued instructions for the forms to be settled as soon as possible; whether on the 4th March 1884, in reply to a question by Mr. Grantham, the same answer was given; and, what steps he has taken, or will take, to ensure an early issue of these much needed forms?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): I am afraid there has been a considerable delay in the issue of those forms—a delay which I can assure the hon. and learned Gentleman has been unavoidable. However, I am informed that the forms are now very nearly ready, and will be issued as soon as possible.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS — MOHILL UNION, CO. LEITRIM—DISTRIBUTION OF VOTING PAPERS BY THE POLICE.

Mr. HAYDEN (Devon, Ashburton) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that, in the Mohill (county Leitrim) Poor Law Union, the distribution of voting papers, a duty hitherto performed every year by the men of the Irish Constabulary, has had to be done in the present year by the rate collectors and relieving officers of the Union, in consequence of the employment of the police in executing an extraordinary number of evictions in the county; whether the Union will be recouped the expense of the distribution and collection of the papers; and, how it happened that the police were withdrawn from the performance of their statutory duty, and wholly employed upon evictions?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Sir, there is no statutory obligation on the police to distribute voting papers. Under their regulations they are directed to render such aid, subject to the condition that it shall interfere with their paramount and special duties. I am informed that other duties absorbed all the spare men in the county of Leitrim and elsewhere between the 17th and 25th of last month; and it was, consequently, impossible to render the Guardians the assistance usually afforded them. I am not aware that there is any provision for recouping the expenses of Guardians in such an instance.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND)—OVERCHARGES IN COLLECTION OF COUNTY CESS BY MR. JOHN GARTLEY, KILCAR, CO. DONEGAL.

Mr. BERNARD KELLY (Donegal, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is a fact that John Gartley, county cess collector for the parish of Kilcar, in the county of Donegal, has, in a large number of cases, made overcharges in his cess collections; if this practice has extended over a considerable period; if recently, after various complaints had been made, Gartley went through his district and (pretending that his overcharges were only mistakes in his figures) offered to refund the sums paid over and above the amount for which the parties were liable; and, if an inquiry, with a view to having justice done, will be directed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Cess collectors are appointed by the Grand Jury, and are responsible to them. Anybody having any complaint against them should make it before the Grand Jury; the Government cannot, therefore, hold any inquiry into the matter. I am advised, however, that if the cess collector has obtained any money from persons under false pretences, he can, upon sworn evidence being brought forward, be prosecuted for that offence.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PETITIONS—THE REPORT—ALLEGED FORGERY OF SIGNATURES TO PETITION FROM EAST CAVAN.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co. N.) asked the honourable baronet the Member for Walsall, with reference to the following statement in the latest Report of the Committee on Petitions:—

> "Your Committee have, in the case of the Petition from East Cavan (against a separate Parliament for Ireland), reported to the House the number of names appended thereto, but they are of opinion that many of the names are in the same handwriting;"

whether he will state the number of forged names in the Petition referred to; whether he will recommend any steps to be taken with a view to distinguishing between the signatures of adults and those of infants in Petitions against a separate Parliament for Ireland; and, whether any Petitions from Ireland against a separate Parliament for that Country have been presented this Session which have been without forged signatures? Lest it should be supposed that the Petition had been presented by the hon. Member for West Belfast, he wished to state that it had been presented by the hon. Member for North Armagh.

SIR CHARLES FORSTER (Walsall), in reply, said, that the signatures of 117 names to the Petition were evidently in the same handwriting, being written in 23 batches. There had not been a Petition presented in the present Session from Ireland upon the same subject and with the same object which did not contain some signatures which were not in the handwriting of the persons whose names were subscribed. As to recommending what steps should be taken in the matter, he must repeat the answer he gave a few nights ago—namely, that this was a question rather for the House than for the Committee, whose duties were purely Ministerial, and had been carried out in directing attention to the matter, as they had done in this case.

MAJOR SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): Might I ask a further Question of the hon. Baronet? I would ask, whether any Petition upon any subject largely signed is not liable to the same objection that some of the signatures would be the same?

[No reply.]

EMIGRATION (IRELAND)—THE DISTRESS IN THE WEST OF IRELAND.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true that the Local Government Board have offered to the Guardians of the Westport Union £7 for each person emigrated from that Union; and, if so, whether he will direct the Local Government Board to use any funds at their disposal for such purposes to provide food for the starving people of the Western Islands?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It was represented to the Local Government Board that certain families on the West Coast had expressed a desire to emigrate if they had the means of doing so. The Board thereupon communicated with some of the Western Boards of Guardians, informing them that there was an unexpended balance of the sums granted for emigration purposes under the Arrears and Tramways Acts, and that those sums, upon certain conditions, might be applied towards carrying out the wishes of the people referred to. From the replies which have been received, however, the Guardians do not appear to be disposed to take advantage of the offer. Legislation would be necessary to enable this fund to be applied to other relief purposes.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION—THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

MR. EDWARD RUSSELL (Glasgow, Bridgeton) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether it will be possible to issue ad interim reports of the proceedings of the Royal Commission on Elementary Education?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir LYON PLAYFAIR) (Leeds, S.): The hon. Member should put his Question to the right hon. Member for South-West Lancashire, who is President of the Royal Commission. I am not a Member of it, and have no administrative connection with it.

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton), in reply, said, that the Commission possessed the power to issue such Reports, and that they probably would exercise it, when it should appear advantageous to do so.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—DRUMFIN DIVISION, SLIGO UNION.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, in the election of a Poor Law guardian for the Drumfin Division of the Sligo Union, the returning officer was entitled to refuse to allow two ratepayers named Peter Kiland and Thomas Gunning to vote, on the ground that they were in arrear of Seed Rate; whether the returning officer counted for Mr. Patterson, one of the candidates, six votes in respect of voting papers purporting to be signed by Mr. Jemmett Duke, though Mr. Jemmett Duke was absent from Ireland, and did not sign the papers; and, whether, as Mr. Patterson's opponent's majority was two, Mr. Melinoe, the candidate who obtained the majority of valid votes, will be declared elected?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Yes, Sir; I am informed that the Returning Officer did disallow the votes referred to in the first paragraph of the Question. This, I am informed, he was legally bound to do. There was nothing before the Returning Officer to warrant his concluding that Colonel Duke had not signed the paper. If the defeated candidate appeals on the ground that the Colonel did not sign the paper, the Local Government Board will take the case into consideration?

Mr. SEXTON: Is it not a fact that the decision of the Local Government Board was overruled by the Court of Queen's Bench?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY said, he was not aware of that fact.

PUBLIC OFFICES — THE NEW ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE.

Mr. W. H. SMITH (Strand, Westminster) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If Her Majesty's Government will consent to the appointment of a Committee to re-consider the whole question of the provision for a new Admiralty and War Office?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby), in reply, said, he understood the Question of the right hon. Gentleman to be put with a view to ascertaining whether it would not be possible to provide for the wants of the Admiralty and War Office at less cost than was now proposed—in point of fact, whether it was necessary to pull down the existing Admiralty. If that were so, all he could say was that he would be very glad that such an inquiry should be made, and if the right hon. Gentleman would move for a Committee, he would be glad to support him.

ARMY—SERVICE IN THE AUXILIARY FORCES.

Viscount LEWISHAM (Lewisham) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether service in the ranks of the Auxiliary Forces (five years of which service under recent regulations counts as one year's commissioned service towards honorary rank) is to be counted at the rate of one year's commissioned service for every five years, or whether complete periods of five years will alone be taken into consideration?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): I do not quite understand the point of the noble Viscount's Question; but if he means to ask whether the five years' service must have been continuous, my answer is no.

ARMY—ORDNANCE STORE DEPARTMENT.

Viscount LEWISHAM (Lewisham) asked the Secretary of State for War, Why the increase to the Ordnance Store Department of three Assistant Commissaries General, authorised under Item D, Vote 9, Army Estimates 1885-6, has not been carried out; and, whether, as the addition of nine Deputy Assistant Commissaries General, authorised at the same time, has already been carried into effect, he will cause the appointments to the higher ranks to be gazetted forthwith?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): I must remind the noble Viscount that an Estimate is not in itself an authority for additional expenditure. Although when the Estimates for 1885-6 were framed it was anticipated that three more Assistant Commissaries General of Ordnance would be required, it was found, later in the year, that such an addition to the rank was not necessary.

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—CANTERBURY GAOL—CASE OF WILLIAM JOSLIN.

Mr. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the circumstances connected with the death of William Joslin, who died in Canterbury Prison on the 19th inst.; whether this man, while suffering from pneumonia, was called upon to undergo the ordinary prison discipline; and whether, at the coroner's inquest, evidence was given to that effect; and, whether he will direct an official investigation to be made into the case?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): As far as I have been able to ascertain on the short Notice which my hon. Friend has given me, the prisoner William Joslin complained to the medical officer on Monday, the 15th ultimo. The next day he was taken off the treadwheel. On the 17th, he was ordered medicine and put to bed in his cell. On the 19th he was ordered into hospital, and he died on the 21st. The medical officer does not seem to me, as far as my information at present goes, to have recognized sufficiently early that the case was one of pneumonia. I shall order a most strict inquiry into the whole matter.

FISHERIES (EAST COAST)—ENCROACHMENTS OF BELGIAN TRAWLERS.

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If his attention has been called to the renewed depredations by Belgian trawlers on English fishing vessels belonging to the Port of Lowestoft; and, whether he will order a cruiser to proceed to the fishing grounds forthwith, and to remain there till the Spring fishing is concluded?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): Two sailing cruisers and one steam vessel are detailed for duties in connection with the fisheries on the East Coast, and have been continually cruising there since Christmas. No reports of any recent depredations by Belgian trawlers have been received; but orders have now been given for an additional steam cruiser to visit and cruise in the neighbourhood of Lowestoft.

TRADE AND COMMERCE—PUBLICATIONS OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—ISSUE TO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

MR. F. HARDCASTLE (Lancashire, S.E., Westhoughton) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he is willing to enter into arrangements on liberal terms with Chambers of Commerce, and other recognised Associations of Traders, whereby, on payment annually of a moderate sum calculated on the number of their members, every member of such Chamber or Association shall receive by post a copy of every commercial circular or other report, and other Government publications bearing on trade subjects?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Board of Trade will be very pleased to consider any proposal for the distribution of the publications issued by them to Chambers of Commerce. They could not, however, undertake the sale and distribution of such publications at reduced rates to individual members of such institutions, as that would be a duty quite beyond the province of the Board of Trade, and would entail considerable expense on the Treasury.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACT, 1878.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, If the Government intend to introduce a measure to amend "The Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, 1878," during the present Session?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY (Mr. HENEAGE) (Great Grimsby): The Lord President intends to introduce a measure to amend the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, 1878, before Easter.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—SCULPTURES AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, With reference to the sepulchral and other sculptures at present stored in the basement of the British Museum, what is the height from floor to ceiling of the place in question; what are the heights of the surrounding buildings, and at what distances do they stand from the windows of the place in question; whether any beyond a few of the sculptures can be sketched or properly viewed where they at present stand; whether the same trouble and skill is given to the cleansing of these sculptures as to those in the rest of the Museum; and, whether, according to a recent estimate, a great part of these sculptures could be properly exhibited in a room on the site of the old print room, by the alteration of certain door-ways, at a cost of not more than £2,000?

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked, Whether any provision was made in the Estimates for exhibiting these sculptures?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The basement in question is vaulted, the height from floor to crown of arch being 12 feet 2 inches. There are more rooms than one in which the Greek and Roman sculptures are placed. One of these, for sepulchral monuments, has only borrowed light on each side; the distance of the adjacent building is 26 feet 4 inches, and the height of the wall 33 feet 2 inches. The greater part of the sepulchral monuments can be viewed and sketched by students when the weather is not unfavourable; but they cannot be visited by the general public. The sculptures in the other rooms can be sufficiently seen; but the rooms are unsuitable for purposes of general exhibition. The sculptures are not regularly dusted as are those in the exhibition galleries, in which there is a greater amount of dust from the traffic of visitors. They are carefully washed once a year. They were so washed in September and October, 1884, in April, 1885, and in January, 1886. The room formerly occupied by the department of prints and drawings can be made to accommodate the principal part of the sepulchral monuments at an estimated cost of £1,600.

COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—RESULTS-EXAMINATIONS AND FEES.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that, for several years past, the Results Examinations have not been held in the month of March, while the Results year ends in February; whether the payment of the Results' fees has often been delayed until June; and, whether there would be any difficulty in having the Results' fees paid within a fortnight or three weeks after the Examination?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am informed that the general rule of the Education Office is that the results fees should be paid in the month following that in which the Examination is held. In exceptional cases unavoidable delays occasionally arise. The Commissioners state that, having regard to the engagements and duties of their Inspectors, it is not in their power to undertake to do more than to carry out the general rule I have mentioned. The number of Results Examinations held in March has been largely in excess of the average number for the other months of the year.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Would it be possible for the Commissioners of Education to distribute the delay more equally over different parts of Ireland, so that our unfortunate county will not be put to this inconvenience year by year?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I will lay the suggestion before the Commissioners, and see what they say.

ARMY—DEPOT OF THE RIFLE BRIGADE.

Mr. TOTTENHAM (Winchester) asked the Secretary of State for War, Why the establishment of Officers laid down for the Depôt of the Rifle Brigade in Special Army Circular, dated 10th November 1885, has not been made up to its proper strength, viz. three Majors, three Captains, and ten Lieutenants; whether the actual strength of the Depôt is correctly shown in the monthly official Army List for March as being two Majors, two Captains, and three Lieutenants; and, when it is proposed to fill up these vancancies for nine Officers?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): Three out of the four battalions which compose the Rifle Brigade being abroad, it was necessary to provide for an unusually large depôt. An establishment of officers was accordingly fixed as a maximum to be employed whenever the number of recruits might render the services of so many officers requisite. It was not, however, contemplated to add officers to the Army for the purpose, but to make up any deficiency by employing officers of Militia. There are now two Majors, three Captains, and four Subalterns at the depôt, who suffice for the men at present there.

ADMIRALTY—ADMINISTRATION OF THE DOCKYARDS.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If it is true that, upon the recommendation of a Committee, consisting of a Vice Admiral who has had no experience at a Home Dockyard, an Admiralty Clerk, and a Constructive Officer in a subordinate position in the Admiralty Office, vital changes have been made in the administration of the Dockyards, whereby four principal Officers of great experience and ability have been "forcibly retired;" if it is true that new permanent offices were created, causing an additional expenditure of £5,300 a year; if it is true that all the Committee and their Secretaries have been appointed to lucrative offices, three of which were created on their own recommendation; and, whether it is true that the recommendations in the Report submitted by the Committee to their Lordships are at variance on material points with the evidence given by the Superintendents of the Dockyards?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): In reply to the first paragraph of the Question of the hon. Member for the Camlachie Division of Glasgow, I have to say that it is true. The Committee he refers to was composed of a Vice Admiral, who had had experience as a Superintendent at Malta Dockyard, of a principal clerk, and of a constructive officer, who was attached to the Surveyor of Dockyards. The Report of this Committee was referred to a superior Committee, consisting of the following Members:—The late Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Ritchie), Sir Reginald Welby, Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, and the Permanent Secretary and the Accountant General of the Navy. The extra expense of the new Government offices created at the Dockyards is about £2,700, and not the amount stated in the Question. It is true that all the Members of the Committee and their Secretaries have been appointed to important offices; but these gentlemen have been selected by the late First Lord of the Admiralty as the most suitable persons for the vacant posts. In reply to the last clause of the hon. Member's Question, I can only say that action was taken on the evidence as a whole, full consideration having been given to the views expressed by the Superintendents of the Dockyards. Although I have answered the Question, I may point out to the hon. Member that it would have been much more convenient to give an explanation in Committee of Supply than in answer to a Question.

PHŒNIX PARK (DUBLIN)—THE NEW BARRACKS.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If the building of the new barrack in the Phœnix Park has been suspended as promised, pending parliamentary discussion; and, when is the Vote likely to be brought on?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): Yes; the work has been suspended, and an opportunity will be afforded of discussing the matter; but I cannot now predict when the Vote will come on.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA—THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

Mr. MAGNIAC (Bedford, N., Biggleswade) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When he proposes to take the East India Committee, and, if he cannot name a day, whether he will give reasonable notice of the day, when determined on; and, having regard to the great interest felt in the question by large and important trading and agricultural interests, whether he will take the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill on an early day; and, if so, on what day?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): As regards the first branch of the Question, I am afraid that, owing to a difference of opinion which has unfortunately sprung up, and it not being in my power at this moment to assign a time for the discussion, the nomination must stand over for a short time; but due Notice will be given before it is proposed to take it. With regard to the second part, I am not able to form any estimate as to what we can do with regard to the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill until I see my way more perfectly, which I may be able to do after the sitting to-night with regard to the Crofters Bill.

EDUCATION—APPOINTMENTS TO PROFESSORSHIPS.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in cases in which professorships and other similar appointments are in the gift of a Minister of the Crown, or of Her Majesty, on the recommendation of a Minister, the practice could be observed, which is customary with other individuals or boards exercising similar rights of patronage, of giving public notice and fixing a certain day for making the appointment, by which means all candidates would have an equal opportunity of making application, and (if necessary) of sending in testimonials?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): This Question refers to two classes of appointments, with one of which I am practically conversant, and with the other of which I am not practically conversant. In the first class are placed certain appointments to Professorships, which it is the duty of the Prime Minister to recommend. From my own personal experience, I am not aware that any change is required. Of course, I can conceive the opinion — though I should be far from saying—that whenever an appointment is to be made, public notice should be given, and candidates should be invited to apply; but I do not think that principle could advantageously apply to the class of appointments I now speak of in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge; and I am bound to say this—not in reference to my own knowledge in this branch of duty, but speaking of this class of appointments — I think they have, on the whole, been properly and creditably filled. With regard to the Professorships which my hon. Friend, I presume, has in view—these are the Professorships in the Scottish Universities —with respect to these appointments, I have no practical experience whatever; but I understand from my right hon. Friend (Sir Lyon Playfair) that the whole object this Question has in view is an object which is perfectly obtained by the present state of things. Without any formal notice, the vacancy is always matter for notoriety, and ample time is always given before making the appointment. Consequently, I am under the impression that all persons who are disposed to offer themselves have ample opportunity of doing so under the present arrangements, and I am not prepared, as at present advised, to say that any change should take place.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[Bill 118.] Committee.

[*Progress 29th March.*]

[Second Night.]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (A crofter shall not be removed except for breach of statutory conditions).

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): It appears to me that Sub-section 6, which gives the landlord the right of entering upon the holding for the purpose of taking stone, marble, gravel, sand, brick-clay, fire-clay, or slate, is capable of amendment. I propose to strike out, after the word "sand," the words "brick-clay, fire-clay," and to add, at the end, the words "or other workable minerals." The effect will be to make that part of the sub-section read "quarrying or taking stone, marble, gravel, sand, clay, slate, or other workable minerals." The words as they stand are not sufficiently comprehensive. I know that there are many other minerals which are workable, besides those mentioned in the clause; and I think it is desirable to extend the definition in the way I have suggested. It is for the interest of everyone that it should be extended in order to encourage employment in the neighbourhood.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 12, after the word "sand," to omit the words "brick clay, fire clay."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the Clause."

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I think that the second word "clay" might be allowed to remain.

THE LORD ADVOCATE assented.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, East): I also think it would be quite sufficient to strike out the words "brick clay, fire," after the word "sand," so that the second word "clay" would still be retained, and would follow the word "sand."

Question, "That the words 'brick clay, fire,' stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): That, I think, will cover the Amendment of which Notice has been given by the hon. Member for North-West Lanarkshire (Mr. Baird) to include "thatching clay."

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): Does the hon. Member propose to move his Amendment?

MR. BAIRD (Lanarkshire, N.W.): No.

On the Motion of THE LORD ADVOCATE, the following Amendments made:—In page 2, line 13, omit the word "or;" in the same line, after "slate," insert "or other workable minerals."

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): The next division of the sub-section gives the landlord the right of entering the holding for the purpose of cutting or taking timber or peats, excepting timber and other trees planted by the crofter or his predecessors in the holding, being of the same family, or that may be necessary for ornament or shelter, and excepting also such peats as may be required for the use of the holding. I propose, in line 16, to omit the words "being of the same family." A few minutes ago I might have said that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate would not accept a single Amendment we propose to insert in the Bill; but I am not able to say that now, because he has just accepted one, although of a very trifling character. The object of my Amendment is to secure to the crofter the right to timber planted by any of his predecessors. I am not disposed, after the experience we had on Monday night, to waste my own time, or the time of the Committee, at any considerable length in a futile attempt to extend the scope of the Bill, because I gather, from the course taken on the previous occasion, that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is supported by the whole strength of the Conservative Party in the Division Lobby, and that any such attempt would be a failure. But on analyzing the Division List of Monday last I find that, leaving out the Opposition and the Official votes, I had really a majority of 11. I propose to move this Amendment formally, and to take a division upon it, in order to test the opinion of the Committee once more. It will then be for me and for others, who are trying to make the Bill of some service, to consider whether it will be worth while to make any further effort, or to allow the Bill to pass in the precise form the Government desire it to assume. It would almost appear that the will of the Government is no more to be changed than the laws of the Medes and Persians. I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 16, to leave out the words "being of the same family."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): There is no indisposition whatever on the part of the Government to accept any Amendment which appears to be reasonable and proper; and I shall give, in a few sentences, a very good reason for retaining the words "being of the same family." Indeed, I should not have been surprised if it had been suggested that those words give too great a latitude. It was explained the other evening that no person holding a croft could be there by virtue of any assignment, or under free sale, because there is no such thing as a right of assignment in such cases of yearly tenancy in Scotland; therefore the only way in which the crofter could come to have the holding at all would either be by direct contract with his landlord, or by having succeeded to it from some other person of the same family. So desirous have we been to give the full benefit of the hereditary principle in the case of the crofters that, apart altogether from strict heirship, we propose to give them the benefit of all improvements effected by the family in connection with the croft. If these words are struck out, the clause will read—

> "Excepting timber and other trees planted by the crofter or his predecessors in the holding, or that may be necessary for ornament or shelter."

I would ask the Committee to see what the effect of that would be. It would amount to this—that if the holding had fallen back into the hands of the landlord, or had been surrendered to him and had been relet by the landlord to a new tenant, the improvements would be improvements by a predecessor, and would have to be paid for, even though the croft so improved had passed from the proprietor into the hands of the new tenant. I will ask the Committee if that is at all reasonable? It is said—"Look at the Irish Act;" and my reply is that there was good reason for the inclusion of these words in the Irish Act, because, if I rightly understand, the right of assignment of the goodwill exists in Ireland. ["No, no!"] It exists generally, I believe; but it is not so with us in Scotland. That is the explanation of what was done in the case of the Irish Act. I may be wrong, but I believe I am correct, when I say that there is a presumption of assignability in the case of an Irish tenant, and of an English tenant also; whereas in Scotland it is the other way. As a matter of fact, in Ireland it would be perfectly impossible, in many cases, to get a predecessor in the same family; and the effect of our proposal in this clause is, that if the crofter derives his title from any member of the same family he has a right to have certain things reserved to which he has acquired a right by succession. I believe I have stated reasons which will satisfy the Committee that there is something in the words which have been inserted in the clause.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Although assignment may not be the law of Scotland, there are many crofters now in the possession of holdings who would be injuriously affected by the inclusion of these words in the clause, notwithstanding the fact that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate seems from his remarks to imply that the restriction is only to be operative in the future. In every case where a crofter is in possession of a holding, and the landlord claims a right to cut down trees, I presume it would be necessary for the crofter to prove that the croft was still in the possession of the family by whom the trees were planted, and also to prove his own connection with the family. Of course, the landlord would always have it in his power to prevent the holding from falling into the hands of any other family by refusing to accept a proposed tenant. Under these circumstances I shall support the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Macfarlane).

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I cannot think that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate can have thoroughly considered the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Macfarlane). It is not a question of compensation at all. The clause does not deal with the question of compensation, and this part of it has reference to the right of the landlord to enter the holding in order to cut down trees which he has not planted. That raises no question of compensation at all. The case is this—the trees may have been planted in the croft by a predecessor, and the real question is whether the crofter is entitled to the improvements of his predecessor, or whether the landlord has a right to cut down trees which he has not placed in the croft. I can see no reason why he should be allowed to enter, cut down, and take them away. When we come to consider the extreme paucity of trees in the Highlands of Scotland, I think that such places might be spared. I therefore think the Amendment of my hon. Friend ought to be accepted.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): The authority of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate is, of course, very great; but I certainly think that there is a considerable amount of uncertainty as to the meaning of the phrase "being of the same family," and that it ought to be better defined, although, even if it were, I admit that I should still object to it strongly. Of course, a man's son would be of the same family, and his brother, I presume, as well as his cousin, or a first cousin once removed, or a second cousin. I understand that in Scotland relationship is carried out very widely, and it strikes me that there would be considerable difficulty, unless this phrase is better defined, in arriving at a conclusion as to what "being of the same family" really includes. I know there are cases among the crofters—and I believe they are very numerous—where a consideration has been paid by the successor to a croft to his predecessor. It is not always paid in public, and perhaps there has not always been a receipt given; but, as a matter of fact, a consideration does occasionally pass from one to another as one man succeeds another to a croft—such cases, for instance, as where a house has been pulled down by a predecessor and rebuilt, or land has been reclaimed to a considerable extent. I myself met, on one occasion, a small householder living by the seashore who had expended money in that way in order to compensate his predecessor in title for the improvements he had effected. Are such purchasers as these to receive nothing? I think that where a custom of this kind has been established, we ought to consider the equity of the case, and make the same provision here as has been done in Ireland. I shall, therefore, earnestly support the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Macfarlane).

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I may explain that the words "being of the same family" have been introduced into the clause in order to give the greatest possible latitude and to cover any persons within the range of succession. I am quite aware that this is not a clause relating to compensation. The same principle will arise in a great number of cases, and if there are any cases such as that which has been mentioned by the hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton), of private bargains entered into without the knowledge of the landlord, they have no legal force whatever.

Mr. MACFARLANE: In answer to the statement of the right hon. and learned Gentleman as to the difference between the law of Ireland and the law of Scotland, I will read a few remarks made by the Prime Minister in introducing the Irish Land Act. He said—

> "But what I wish to impress upon the House is this—that, apart from those specialities, the principle of assignment is a principle rooted in law. By artificial provisions, introduced into agreements, through commanding position of landlords, assignment has been generally prohibited; but the assignment of the tenants' interest, whatever it be, is a principle, not only of Irish, but of English Land Laws and of the Land Laws of Europe generally."—(3 *Hansard*, [260] 901.)

That was the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, and it has just been contradicted by the Lord Advocate. [The Lord Advocate: Exactly the other way.] As to the contention of the right hon. and learned Gentleman in opposition to the removal of this limitation, my impression is that a large number of crofters in Scotland have derived their rights to the holdings they now occupy by purchase from other persons. But I would ask, what does it matter to anyone by whom the improvements on the holding which a man has occupied for years were made—whether they were made by the man who now occupies the holding, or by anybody else, so long as the crofter is in possession of them? It is quite clear to me that these words have been adopted for the purpose of limiting and confining the operation of the Act, and they are words which will not be found in the corresponding Statute relating to Ireland. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman will accept the words of the Irish Land Act, I would be quite willing to agree to that, and I should be perfectly ready to give up the advantages which he proposes to confer upon my countrymen by this limitation —namely, that the right shall only be enjoyed by direct members of the same family. What I ask the Government is, that they should not treat the Scotch tenants in a shabby fashion, but that they should treat them as they have already treated the Irish tenants. If the crofter has bought, or acquired, a certain improvement by lawful means, what does it matter whether it was made by a relative of his own, or a relative of somebody else? I maintain that these words would operate as a restriction which would have a very injurious effect upon the working of the Bill, and I shall, therefore, divide the Committee upon the Amendment.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, East): I entirely support the view of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, and it must be remembered that it is not Irish law, but Scotch law, that we are now dealing with. There is no right of assignment known to the Scotch law, and, in the Highlands, assignment is not known even in an illegal and unrecognized form. The fact is, that the hon. Gentleman who has moved this Amendment is trying to induce the Committee to reconsider the decision already arrived at by the Committee on the question of free sale. He is endeavouring to bring in, by a side issue, a principle which the Committee have already rejected. We have already decided that a tenant shall only acquire his right to the property by direct succession.

Mr. C. S. PARKER (Perth): It seems to me that the time of the Committee is being wasted upon a very small point. ["No, no!"] Yes; it is so, and what I wish to say is this—that the amount of timber in the Islands is almost infinitesimal, and so far as the crofters' holdings in the Highlands are concerned it cannot be a matter of importance. It must also be borne in mind that the landlord cannot, under any circumstances, enter upon the holding in order to cut down trees that are necessary for ornament or shelter. I do not think the point now being discussed is one upon which the Committee ought to waste further time.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I really think the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has not clearly laid down the principle of this clause. The principle laid down in it is, that the landlord—

> "Shall cut or take timber or peats, except timber and other trees planted by the crofter or his predecessors in the holding, being of the same family, or that may be necessary for ornament or shelter."

I do not see why he should make an exception which involves the fact that the crofter must necessarily have inherited the holding from some member of his own family. I certainly think it would be better to go a little further, and act upon the principle of the old song, "Woodman, spare that tree."

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): The insertion of these words, which are supported by the Government, and resisted by the Scotch Members to a certain extent, does lay down a principle that improvements effected by the tenant do not belong to the landlord. That is the first principle involved in the clause—namely, that the landlord shall not get what he is not entitled to. I am prepared to concur to this extent with the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate—that we may abandon the principle of free sale, seeing that it is not known to the Scotch law. The question, however, which is raised in this case, is not the question of free sale, but whether the landlord is to be entitled to come in and take what does not belong to him. I do not think we ought to lose our grip of the principle that a landlord ought not to get that which he is not entitled to. If we agree that the landlord is entitled to come in and take that which does not belong to him, we should be erecting a principle of landlordism which, in all other forms of legislation, we have struck down. It, therefore, appears to me that there is a certain amount of importance attached to the insertion of these few words. I do not believe that the entire landlords of Scotland would cut down 10 trees in 10 generations, and therefore it is not a question of money; and although, in deference to the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, I put aside the principle of free sale, on the ground that it has not hitherto been known to the Scotch law, there yet remains the further principle of the right of the landlord to improvements which he has not effected, and which he does not pretend to have made. Surely that is an economical consideration which ought not to be lost sight of. In Ireland, the refusal of these rights to the tenant have produced the poverty of the country. Carlyle, in his famous essay, speaking of the moisture which prevails in the Irish soil, blamed the Irish people for not planting trees upon them. But why should they plant trees which, when planted, would not belong to them, but would become the property of the landlord? So far as the tenants of Ireland are concerned, it must not be forgotten that property frequently passes in consequence of the marriages which take place; and considerations of a matrimonial character are often much stronger than those of a monetary character. Under all the circumstances, I think the Scotch Members are justified, in this case, in resisting the thin end of the wedge, and in refusing to give to the landlord that which does not belong to him.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not in any way acknowledge the right of the landlord to take away that which does not belong to him; but, in this case, it is just because the trees belong to the landlord, and to nobody else, even although they may have been planted by a predecessor who was not one of the family in possession of the holding, that the retention of the words in the clause is insisted upon. We give the tenant the benefit of everything done by a predecessor who is a member of the same family, and also the same right to retain all trees necessary for ornament or shelter. The object of the Bill is to give a permanency of tenure much beyond any that exists in Ireland, and during that permanency or perpetuity of tenure the timber may be ripening. Then what is to be done with it? It does not belong to the tenant, unless it was planted by him, or someone whom he represents; and if these words are not inserted, the provision would cover timber planted by a tenant who had resigned the holding into the hands of the landlord, from whom the present tenant may have taken it with the trees upon it.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I wish to explain that the question raised by the Amendment is not so small or so simple as it appears. This is the first clause in the Bill in which these words appear; but when we go a little further it will be found that the same words are used in order to form a barrier to compensation. Therefore, the question at issue is not only the value of the trees in the Highlands, but a much more important principle is involved in another part of the Bill. If these words are allowed to stand in this clause, they will probably be allowed to stand in the Compensation Clause; and that is one reason why I propose to divide the Committee.

Mr. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): It has been asserted, in the course of discussion, that some of these small occupiers, when they obtained their tenaments, paid their predecessors for certain things which existed on the holding at the time it was entered upon. Now, during the period in which I was either a crofter, or a tenant farmer, or a proprietor, I never knew a single instance of that kind occur. ["Oh, oh!"] Hon. Members say, "Oh!" but I must say that very few hon. Members, and even some Scotch Members who have been discussing the terms of this Bill, appear to know much of what they have been talking about in regard to the condition and circumstances of the population of the Western Highlands. If they did, they would never talk as they have done. It so happens that I speak from personal experience, both as an owner and as an occupier, and as one well acquainted with the circumstances and condition of these people; and yet, when I speak of a fact which is within my own experience, some hon. Gentleman object and cry "Oh!" as if their exclamation were an argument.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): The reason why we press this Amendment, and propose to go to a division upon it, is because we are of opinion that by adopting the clause, as it stands, the Committee will sanction the principle of taking possession of other people's property, and would practically legalize spoliation and robbery. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Ramsay) says that he is well acquainted with the condition of the people of the Western Highlands. Now, during the last 20 years I have endeavoured to obtain a thorough knowledge of the people, and the customs of the people, in the Northern Higlands, and the practice there is to allow a tenant to build, and then to permit him to receive from his successor in the holding what are called "ameliorations." When the tenant gives up his holding, as a matter of practice, the successor is permitted to pay ameliorations, and by that means he comes into possession of the holding. That principle has been followed in regard to a large number of estates where there has been a transfer of title, and the successor is also rendered responsible for the debts of his predecessor. If this clause is passed, as it now stands, it will give to the landlord the improvements which were made by the predecessor in title of the persons who now occupy the holding, and the consequence will be that the occupier will have to pay twice—first, for the improvement; and, secondly, in the shape of an increased rent. It is in order to prevent this confiscation of the property of the tenant, that we are determined to divide the Committee upon the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Macfarlane).

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 259; Noes 107: Majority 152.—(Div. List, No. 54.)

Sir DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.) moved an Amendment, extending the definition of the word "game" to "black game and capercailzie."

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 28, after the words "grouse," insert the words "black game and capercailzie."—(*Sir Donald Currie.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Dr. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty), in moving, as an Amendment, the sub-section of the clause which provides that—

"The crofter shall not, on his holding, without the consent of his landlord, open any house for the sale of intoxicating liquors,"

to leave out "his landlord," for the purpose of inserting "the licensing authority for the time being," said: I think, since I placed this Amendment on the Paper, the Government have placed an Amendment on the Paper which will alter the wording of this clause. I have nothing to say against the stipulation that a crofter shall not open a house for the sale of intoxicating liquors, or for the sale of anything; but I do not think that, in a case of this sort, where, for instance, the consent of the licensing authorities is required, why those authorities should, in this case, be ignored, and the power of refusal be placed in the hands of the landlord. I confess that this is a small point; but it shows that, in the view of the right hon. and learned Gentleman who drew up the Bill, the landlords are omnipotent, and that they ought to override the licensing authorities, the law of the land, and everything else. Nothing whatever is to be done without their consent. Surely this is a matter in which it is for the licensing authorities to say whether a house shall be open for the sale of intoxicating liquors or not. Therefore I shall adhere to my Amendment, to strike out the word "landlord," for the purpose of inserting "licensing authority for the time being."

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 35, to leave out the words "his landlord," and insert the words "the licensing authority for the time being."—(*Dr. McDonald.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): Certainly, this is one of the most familiar stipulations, not only in the letting of land by lease, but also in giving a permanent title to land by way of feu—namely, that there should not be licensed or unlicensed premises of this description on the land. Such a restriction in a title has been upheld by the highest Court of Appeal, not so much in the interest of the landlord, as in that of the neighbouring occupiers. There can be no doubt that nothing is more disastrous than the bringing of drink shops into a community of this kind. The same restriction is very generally introduced in what we call feu charters, dealing with the letting of building land, and this has been done not only for the purpose of keeping up the character and value of the property itself, but also of preserving the character of the properties in the neighbourhood. Therefore, I put it to the Committee that, inasmuch as it is a perfectly lawful restriction which we propose, the Amendment moved by my hon. Friend is altogether unnecessary. The licensing authority is not, by any means, the sole judge of this matter. A person dealing with his own property has a perfect right to say on what conditions he will let it, and that one of these conditions shall be that there shall be no whisky shops opened upon it.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I am rather surprised that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate should have inserted this provision at all. The right hon. and learned Gentleman seems to suppose that if a crofter gets the consent of his landlord, he would be able to sell spirits and other intoxicating liquors; but that is not so, because, although both the landlord and crofter make what arrangement they like, they would be unable to open an establishment for the sale of intoxicating liquors until the occupier had obtained the consent of the licensing authority. I think it is quite unnecessary that this section should be inserted, and, as it seems to reflect on crofters generally, at the proper time I shall move the omission of the words.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I have now to propose the Amendment of which I myself have given Notice—namely, that, in line 35, to leave out the words "open any house for the sale of," in order to insert the words "sell any."

The Bill was framed originally, as has been pointed out, in order to prevent the illicit sale of intoxicating liquors; but, while striking at licensing the sale of intoxicating liquors, it has been pointed out that it would not deal with that which is much worse and more prejudicial—namely, the unlicensed sale of intoxicating liquors in places which are known in Scotland as shebeens. I believe it is a far greater evil, in some of these remote localities, that there should be a certain amount of shebeening, or unlicensed selling of drink, to the disadvantage of the community. The sub-section, as it stands, declares that—

> "The crofter shall not, on his holding, without the consent of his landlord, open any house for the sale of intoxicating liquors;"

and the Amendment will prohibit him from selling intoxicating liquors without the consent of his landlord.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 35, to leave out the words "open any house for the sale of."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out and stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether there is no law at present in Scotland to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquor without a license? It appears to me that, if I am right in believing that there is such a law, the alteration proposed by the right hon. and learned Gentleman is quite unnecessary.

The LORD ADVOCATE: My hon. Friend knows very well that there is such a law.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): The law already provides a stringent punishment for selling liquor without a licence; and now the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate wishes to add another penalty, and that is that the tenant should forfeit his holding. I must protest, in the most emphatic manner, against such a proposal being made from the Government, Bench. No doubt, this, like other restrictive proposals, will be supported by hon. Members opposite; but that it should be proposed by the Government is an evidence of the spirit in which they are dealing with the Bill. If the Bill passes, with all these restrictions in it, it will prove as completely delusive as the Agricultural Holdings Act. The Government have undertaken to deal with this question, and I think the Committee ought to insist upon their dealing with it in a liberal spirit. Certainly, hon. Members sitting in this quarter of the House ought to protest most earnestly against this narrow restriction of the Bill, which will render it altogether worthless. I feel strongly that it will not be worth the time and labour which have been bestowed upon it.

Sir JOHN RAMSDEN (York, W. R., Osgoldcross): I hope that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will not give way in this matter. I can assure the Committee, from my own experience, that an Amendment such as this is most essential, in order to preserve the morality of the people in these remote districts. I have had a good deal of experience in the management of Highland property, and all the years I have been there I never but once had to remove a tenant, and that was for an act which, if this Amendment be rejected, would be allowable—namely, for obtaining a licence to sell intoxicating liquors in spite of the prohibition of his landlord. I should like to point out to the Committee why it is necessary to prevent the illegal sale of liquors upon these holdings. Practically, the law as regards smuggling is not strictly enforced in these remote districts, and in the particular case to which I have referred, after I had removed the tenant, I found it still impossible to put down the illicit sale; and it was only last year that a case occurred which showed that the illicit sale of drink was going on in this very house. It was only found out owing to one of the shepherds in my employment getting liquor at that house, and on his way home falling into the river and being drowned. That was entirely in consequence of the illicit sale of intoxicating liquors. If the Committee were to pass this Bill without a very stringent clause to prevent the illicit sale of liquor, it would lead to the demoralization of these districts almost more than any other step that we could take. I hope, therefore, that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will adhere to his Amendment; and I would submit to him that by inserting a few words he would make it much more practically useful. The words I would suggest are these—that between the words "sell" and "any" he should insert the words "or permit the sale of." The sub-section would then read thus—"The crofter shall not, on his holding, without the consent of his landlord, sell or permit the sale of any intoxicating liquors." Without such words, it is quite possible that, although he might not sell the drink himself, he might connive at another person selling it on his holding, and by that means evade the restriction of this clause, so that the demoralization of the neighbourhood would be just as bad as ever. I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will accept this addition to his Amendment.

Mr. M'LAREN (Stafford): The hon. Baronet (Sir John Ramsden) must be aware that the existing law is perfectly sufficient to deal with such cases as those which he has just mentioned. It is restrictions of this kind that make the people call out against landlordism. The law at present deals with all persons who are convicted of the offence of selling intoxicating liquors in an unlicensed house, and why should the landlord have the paternal right of directing whether a man should sell anything he choose, so long as he remains within the law? At present, the tenant knows that he would subject himself to very heavy penalties, and that he might be taken before the nearest magistrate if he breaks the law. How would the hon. Baronet and his Friends like a law to be passed by this House to evict them from their estates, if they happen to commit some equally trivial offence—an offence satisfied by the payment of a small fine? My right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate appears to be extremely indisposed to mitigate the rigours of this Bill, just as he is indisposed to admit any Amendment which is calculated to improve it. I cannot help saying that I regard the Bill as one which may possibly be not so much a measure for the benefit of the crofters, as a Bill for their extermination, and if Amendments such as this are persisted in, that possibility will become a certainty. The Bill bristles with restrictions on every side, and if my right hon. and learned Friend persists in exhibiting this hard-hearted spirit with regard to the crofters, I am afraid that those who have taken any interest in these people will cease even to raise their voices in protest.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I think that this matter has not yet been sufficiently explained, and certainly strange words have been used by more than one hon. Member. It has just been asserted, for instance, that the Government, in prosecuting this Bill, are doing everything they can against the interests of the crofters. Now, I wish the Committee to consider for a moment the position in which we stand. The Committee have, without a division, passed a clause which renders the tenant liable to be evicted from his holding if he obtains a licence to sell spirits. ["No, no!"] Certainly, that is the object of the decision which was recently arrived at; and it is now suggested that the same penalty should not follow in the case of a person, who, without going to the proper authorities to get a licence, proceeds to do the act which is forbidden even if he gets the authority of the licensing magistrate. What is the necessary result? It is this—that if any person in any township forms the idea of selling spirits, it will be more for his interest to do so as a shebeener, than to attempt to do it as a licensed dealer in accordance with the provisions of the law. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Stafford (Mr. M'Laren) speaks of this as a trivial offence. It is certainly new to me to hear shebeening spoken of as a trivial offence. It may be a trivial offence in this way, that it cannot be visited with a very heavy punishment; but as to its being really a trivial offence, when we consider the effect it has upon the morals of the community, I venture to say that, instead of being a trivial offence, it is a very serious and dangerous offence indeed. I hope the Committee will put aside, at once, the idea that anything that has been stated by my right hon. and learned Friend opposite, or by myself, has been intended to injure the crofters, and that they will be disposed to consider the whole matter fairly and dispassionately. I would ask, then, what good purpose they think would really be obtained by allowing these people to have the chance of shebeening without the liability of being removed from their holdings? Are there many people who desire to get shebeens? I should think not. And do hon. Members opposite desire that, if a person persists in shebeening, he should not be removed from among the community where he is doing the greatest possible moral harm? What good purpose can be accomplished by saying that a man shall be at liberty to sell spirits without a licence, and thus to break the law, when you say that he shall not be able to do it without a licence? The Committee have already decided that, if he obtains a licence, he will be liable to be evicted from the holding. ["No, no!"] I think I have stated the matter fairly and reasonably. ["No, no!"]

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): If a man were to open a shebeen, I apprehend that the law would turn upon him very quickly, and the amount of penalties inflicted upon him would soon put him out of the holding. But what I am afraid of is, that there might be traps laid with regard to the selling of spirits. My right hon. and learned Friend who has just spoken knows the Highlands very well; and I would ask him to consider what might happen if, after a hard day's fishing, he got a glass of whisky from some of these poor people, under the guise of getting a glass of milk, and for such a trifling offence, it would be possible to make a crofter lose his holding on account of his hospitality. I must say that the existing penalties for this trivial offence are sufficiently severe, and that the offence itself is dealt with in a most effectual manner.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I object to the clause, on the ground that it is based on a principle of jurisprudence of a most barbarous character. It is only a few years ago that, in England, the offence called "a felony" was accompanied by the forfeiture of the goods of the person convicted; but Parliament, in its wisdom, abolished the barbarous part of the punishment—namely, the forfeiture of goods, and left the rest of the punishment intact. In this case, the Committee have properly allowed the landlord to prohibit the opening of a licensed house for the sale of intoxicating liquor, and the law as it now stands imposes very severe penalties on any person who opens a house for the sale of liquor without a licence. That law is amply sufficient, and any additional penalty is entirely uncalled for, and altogether opposed to a spirit of enlightened jurisprudence. In point of fact, you would be punishing a man twice for the very same offence. You must remember also another very important consideration. As it sometimes happens that a man is wrongfully convicted, and that he is convicted upon false evidence obtained in a manner in which it ought not to have been obtained, the result, if this Amendment is carried, may be that, owing to a wrongful conviction, a man may be deprived of his holding.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): A mere conviction would not be conclusive. The words I propose to insert are that the crofter should not, without the consent of his landlord, sell any intoxicating liquors. The landlord would be required to prove the illicit selling. There might be a conviction; but it would be perfectly open for the tenant to say—"I was wrongfully convicted."

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton): With all respect for my right hon. and learned Friend opposite (the Lord Advocate), I am inclined to think that the clause is better as it stands in the Bill. I think that we are creating another offence under a measure which is not primarily a penal measure, and I am inclined to agree with the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), when he says that shebeening is sometimes not a deliberate offence. I will give the Committee an instance of a case which occurred in a Northern county within the last few weeks. During the recent snow-storm, the factor of a noble Friend of mine in the North was benighted. I trust that I am stating the facts correctly—at any rate, I am repeating them as they were repeated to me. The gentleman to whom I refer was benighted and overtaken by the snow-storm, and he sought refuge in the house of a poor widow. He obtained refreshments there, and afterwards the widow, who had not the slightest intention of being guilty of shebeening, was convicted of that offence and fined. I am not saying a word in favour or in defence of shebeening; I look upon it as a very serious offence; but what I say is this—that the contention of hon. Members sitting below the Gangway on the other side of the House is quite correct—that the offence is sufficiently dealt with and guarded against by the existing law. I would, therefore, submit to the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether it would not be better to leave the clause as it stands in the Bill.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I should like to understand from the Government how this clause ever came to be heard of at all? It is copied from the Irish Land Bill; but it was not in the original Bill when it was first introduced, and I would advise hon. Members to turn to the pages of *Hansard* which gives the debate that occurred on the 23rd of June, 1881. There, I think, they will find an explanation. When the Bill was under discussion, the present Tory Member for West Down (Lord Arthur Hill) moved this clause—

> "(6.) The tenant shall not, on his holding, without the consent of his landlord, open any house for the sale of intoxicating liquors, or undertake any trade or business of a dangerous or obnoxious character."—(3 *Hansard*, [262] 1190.)

How was that dealt with by the Government? Mr. Law, the late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who was then Attorney General for Ireland, said—

> "The Government could not accept the proposed Amendment; but, on the other hand, it was really a proposal that had, he submitted, already been disposed of the other night on an Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Rankin). The answer which was given then must, he submitted, be the answer now, that the subject was one to be dealt with by the Justices at the Licensing Sessions, who were not usually anxious to open more public-houses than there was any necessity for."—(*Ibid.*)

["Hear, hear!"] Yes; but what happened? As usual on these questions, at that time, the Government had been kept for the whole night by the obstruction of the Tory Party, and an Amendment had been suggested to the effect that the tenant should not be allowed to put up any building or carry out any improvement to the annoyance of his landlord. The Government were on the point of accepting it, and had suggested the substitution of certain words; but, in the meantime, the obstruction was continued, and the Government, I am sorry to say, found themselves compelled at last to yield. This is what happened. Mr. Gladstone said—

> "He thought it very unlikely that the licensing authorities would make any misuse of their powers; but he admitted that there was great force in the observation that what the Bill proposed to do was to protect agricultural tenants in the prosecution of agricultural pursuits, and looking at the rigid nature of the statutory leases, he thought it might be right to introduce some provision of this kind. The Government could not, however, agree to the Amendment exactly as it stood. They could not agree to the words 'dangerous or obnoxious character.'"—(*Ibid.* 1193.)

That Amendment was thus successfully carried by the noble Lord the present Member for West Down, and it was the result of the most persistent obstruction ever known. I remember the night very well, and I know that we moved to report Progress, and that the discussion was kept up for hours. As I before observed, Mr. Law was then Attorney General for Ireland, and he refused with scorn to accept the Amendment of the noble Lord; but the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, being desirous of saving time and out of pure weariness, ultimately found himself obliged to accept it. I may now tell the Scotch Members that, as far as this Amendment is concerned, they would never have had the clause at all if it had not been for what occurred on the night I refer to.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I am not disposed to enter into the reminiscences of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Healy) as to how far the Tory Party were guilty of obstruction four years ago. It is certainly somewhat amusing to hear the virtuous indignation expressed by the hon. Gentleman at anything in the nature of obstruction. [Mr. T. M. HEALY: I return the compliment.] With regard to the Amendment proposed by the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, and opposed by the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigton (Sir Herbert Maxwell), I scarcely think that my hon. Friend really apprehends the exact state of the case. What is it that the Bill proposes? It proposes to give a privilege to the smaller tenants in the Highlands which they never had before. It exacts that no landlord shall henceforth be able to enjoy the power which every landlord has enjoyed up to this time—namely, that of being able to terminate the occupation of any one of his tenants. I am not now arguing whether that is proper or not; but what are you doing now? You are not only compelling the landlord to keep the tenant, but to keep him even if he has been guilty of an offence and has broken the law. You are compelling the landlord not only to keep the tenant who obeys the law, but to keep the tenant also who breaks the the law. That appears to me to be a restriction on the authority of the landlord which is not called for, either in the interest of the public or of the crofters themselves. I am certainly surprised at the course pursued by some hon. Members opposite, who have hitherto been in the habit of voting for the most arbitrary restrictions wherever the sale of intoxicating liquors is concerned. Many of them have advocated the most extreme Temperance doctrines; but they have taken a different course upon this question, because they think it would leave the landlord some shred of the power which he formerly possessed. They, therefore, turn round and say that, whether the tenant commits an offence or not, he should be able to exercise this right without the consent of his landlord. I maintain that this Amendment is an attempt to guard the morals of the community; and in their interests, and in their interests alone, I trust the Committee will support it.

Mr. WHITBREAD (Bedford): Before the Committee come to a decision, I should like to say a word in order to explain why I hope the Government will not press this Amendment. In spite of the great authority of my right hon. and learned Friend who sits below me (the Lord Advocate), I have had a large experience in the management of Highland estates, and I very much doubt whether this proposal, if adopted, would work for the benefit of the morality of the district. I have always myself had a very great doubt as to the policy of the course which is followed by some proprietors in turning the tenant out of his holding the moment they find anything wrong is being done. I think it would be far better for the morality of the district if the landlords would endeavour to deal with these offences by the simple process of the law, and not by turning the tenant off the estate. I would submit, further, that the offence is one which, in this instance, would scarcely justify the landlord in taking such an extreme measure. I am disposed to think—although, no doubt, shebeening is a very bad thing in the Highlands — that the advantage to morality which is to be got by evicting a crofter who is guilty of the offence, is far more than counterbalanced by the hostile feeling which would be evoked throughout the district, and the sympathy which would be meted out to the person who was found guilty of the offence. Looking at all these considerations, I am very much disposed to think that the proposal of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate would, in the long run, do more harm than good.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) Clackmannan, &c.): I have never had a desire to press any matter of this sort against any considerable body of opinion in the Committee, and I only placed the Amendment upon the Paper, because it was pointed out to me that there would be a defect, resulting in mischief in the locality, unless it were inserted. But after the opinions which have been expressed, and especially after what my hon. Friend the Member for North Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter) has said, seeing that there is a considerable difference of opinion on the matter, I am quite ready to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR (Leeds, Central), in moving the rejection of the clause, said: If the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen (Mr. J. A. Campbell) to limit the operation of the clause to those tenants whose rents amounted to £4 per annum had been carried, I should not have considered it necessary to trouble the House with any observations; but since, in my opinion, without that limitation, fixity of tenure is a privilege which is no boon whatever, I think I am justified now in raising the general question of principle. The objection to giving fixity of tenure to the smaller class of agricultural tenants is the danger that it may tend to settle them on holdings which are really too small to maintain them in anything like comfort. I do not believe that any proprietor in the Highlands is desirous, whatever may be said by hon. Members on the other side of the House, of reducing the number of people in his district below the number it is capable of supporting;

but we are bound to face the facts; and the facts are these—that in certain districts of the Highlands no amount of legerdemain in legislation, no schemes for the redistribution of land, however ingenious, will make it possible for such a district to maintain in comfort the number of people that are now upon the land. It is these districts which I should have liked to see this Bill specially deal with. I am sorry to say that I can see very small signs of an attempt to grapple with the real difficulty. The only clauses in the Bill likely to be really operative in reducing the distress and destitution in these districts are the clauses with regard to compensation, and the clauses last introduced into the Bill with regard to the fisheries. Those clauses may, I think, have some operation in reducing the indigence and poverty of the congested districts; but I do not think that the clause which is now before the Committee can possibly have that effect. On the contrary, my impression is that it will actually perpetuate the existing evils by laying down a principle that whoever is settted on the land, no matter how small his holding may be, shall have an absolute right to remain where he is to the detriment of the community generally. The line taken by the Commissioners on this question was very different from the line taken by the Government in their Bill. The Commissioners did not propose to confer fixity of tenure upon the smaller tenants. Indeed, they even went further; for in the case of the small tenants they declined to give any kind of security whatever, not from any want of sympathy with that class, but because of the paramount importance, in their opinion, of consolidating the smaller holdings. To the larger tenants they proposed to give not, indeed, fixity of tenure, but a certain measure of security—that is to say, they proposed to give them improving leases for 30 years. My own opinion is that the scheme of the Commissioners was very much better than the scheme put forward by the Government; and I should like to know what is the reason why in drawing up the Bill, which is professedly founded on the Report of the Royal Commission, they have in this matter deliberately set aside both the warning and the recommendation of the Commissioners, and introduced an entirely different scheme of their own? It cannot be because the right hon. and learned Gentleman who drew up the Bill admits anything like a historical right of the crofter to have fixity of tenure—I mean that kind of right which overrides considerations of expediency; because I believe, if the question were fairly looked into, it would be found that in past times the crofters had no such absolute right. Nor, again, can it be because evictions are common. Everybody admits that at the beginning of the century evictions took place which were greatly to be deplored; but during the last 50 years evictions have become exceedingly rare—so rare that I think nobody will seriously contend that the number of evictions which have taken place during that period have had any appreciable effect upon the history of the Highlands. The only reason I can see is the assumption that if you do not give these small tenants fixity of tenure you will practically deprive them of all the advantages offered by the Bill? Now, it appears to me that to state that argument in that form is really to beg the question. The real question is—are you conferring any advantage upon the small tenant by giving him fixity of tenure? Would it be of any benefit to him to settle him on a holding much too small for his requirements? It appears to me that it would be of no possible benefit to him, but that it would be merely making him a present of perpetual destitution. The hon. Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh) I hold to be, from what he said the other day, of the same opinion as myself; because he told us that he still adhered to the £4 limit he had endeavoured to have assigned in the Report of the Royal Commission—that is to say, that if the Government had adopted the scheme of the Royal Commission, instead of their own, the hon. Member would then have considered a £4 limit desirable. As a Member of the Royal Commission the hon. Member for Inverness-shire advocated the system of improving leases for tenants above the £4 limit, the leases to last for 30 years; below that limit he was not in favour of giving any kind of security of tenure. Then, if, in his opinion, it is not desirable to give small tenants fixity of tenure for even 30 years, how can it be desirable to give them fixity of tenure for ever? I doubt whether the proposal of the Government will be of advantage even to the larger crofters. By giving them fixity of tenure you will remove all the flexibility that exists in the present system; and, instead of that kindness and good feeling which now subsists between the landlord and tenant, you will substitute a state of things which will place the tenant in a much harder and more disadvantageous position than he would occupy under the scheme of the Royal Commission. One incidental advantage I am prepared to admit as a result of fixity of tenure. We are all agreed that the amount of land at present held by the crofting population ought not to be reduced, except in the interest of the people themselves. Undoubtedly, fixity of tenure would secure that any land now held by the crofters should continue to be held by them. But this advantage might be obtained in another way. The Royal Commission proposed to provide, in the case of township lands, that the area of the township shall not be reduced. I should be prepared to extend those conditions, and to place all land from which crofters shall have been hereafter evicted under the control of the Land Commissioners, in order, in that way, to guard against any danger of the crofter being removed by the landlord for his own purposes. That is, I think, the only practical advantage to be derived from any system of fixity of tenure; and I am satisfied that the proposal which I have just mentioned, to place any land from which crofters have been evicted under the control of the Land Court, would be much better for the purpose than the scheme of the Government. I have argued the question from the point of view of what I consider to be of benefit to the crofters; but there is this further argument—namely, that it is desirable, if possible, to obtain the advantages which we desire to confer upon the crofters with the least amount of infringement of the rights of the proprietors. The principle now sought to be introduced for the first time into Scotland is one which has already been established in Ireland; but it is clearly undesirable to extend, without pressing necessity, a principle which was admitted to be exceptional in its application. We know that there are many hon. Members who entertain the confident expectation that the system will not only be extended to the Highlands of Scotland, but all over that country, and, perhaps, to England as well. We ought to be careful not to make that extension easier. It is not, however, upon that ground that I argue this question, but upon the ground that I do not believe fixity of tenure would be good in the interests of the crofters themselves. I cannot, of course, expect that the Government will accept an Amendment which strikes at the root of the fundamental principle of the Bill; and as I feel it is exceedingly important that some legislative measure or other should be passed, and placed on the Statute Book, I do not propose to press my Amendment. I have only put it on the Paper by way of protest; but I would express a hope that the Government will realize how very inadequately their Bill deals with the case of the congested districts, and that they will be prepared to accept, or themselves introduce, Amendments in the Bill more calculated to remedy the distressing state of things than their present proposal of fixity of tenure.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, to leave out Clause 1.—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I have no wish to answer the statement of the hon. Member who has just sat down; but I do not think the matter should be allowed to pass without some notice being taken of the remarks of the hon. Member in regard to the question of eviction. If the hon. Member will refer to page 77 of the Appendix of the Report of the Commissioners, he will find a statement there that notices of removal—which is the nearest information we can get on the subject of evictions—between 1840 and 1883 were given and decrees of removing were got out against 6,960 heads of families. If we multiply that by five, we shall find that during the period referred to the number of persons affected by these decrees of removal amounted to 34,800, so that within 43 years decrees of removal have been had against twice the whole population of the Island of Skye. It therefore surprises me how hon. Members who have looked at the Report can possibly overlook such facts as those, and come down and tell us there have been no evictions in the Highlands to complain of. The hon. Member has also stated that these districts have not been overrun. Then I wish to know what the people are suffering from? They are suffering from poverty, in consequence of the landlords exacting more rent than the people are able to bear, or the land is worth.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: Allow me to explain. If the hon. Gentleman will refer to page 16 of the Report of the Royal Commission, he will find that the Commissioners state the evictions have done their work, and have now passed away for ever.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: I would refer the hon. Member to the abstract which I have read from the Sheriff Court Records, which I certainly prefer to the statements of the Commissioners.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause *ordered* to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2 (Provision for resumption by landlord).

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I wish to move, in page 2, line 43, after "harbours," to insert "piers," so that the Land Commission may, on the application of the landlord, enable him to resume the holding for the construction of piers, in addition to the other purposes specified in the clause.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 43, after the word "harbours," insert the word "piers."—*(Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald.)*

Question, "That the word 'piers' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Question, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Removal of crofter for breach of conditions. 46 & 47 Vic. c. 62).

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): The first part of the clause reads as follows:—

> "When one year's rent of the holding, but less than two years' rent, is due and unpaid, the crofter shall be liable to be removed in manner provided by section twenty-seven of the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883."

My opinion is that the time given there is much too short, and that it gives the landlord power to remove the tenant much too soon. Where there are banging gales there has always been a certain amount of rent allowed to remain unpaid even when due; and in that case, according to this section, the landlord would have the power to evict a tenant from the holding, even if he were only six months in arrear. I maintain that the failure to pay one year's rent is too little to entitle the landlord to remove the tenant, and that it should be two years. Two years would give a poor tenant a much better chance, because we know that in bad seasons, although with every wish to pay, in consequence of bad crops and a thousand other causes, the tenant, however willing he may be, may be unable to pay the rent in 12 months. Yet if he is more than 12 months in arrear he may lose his hold for ever over the holding. I think this would be most unfair to the tenant. We must look at all the necessities of the crofter, all the poverty from which he suffers, and we ought to give him a reasonable time to enable him to pay his rent. I have another Amendment later on to propose in the second paragraph of this clause; but it is not necessary that I should refer to it now. What I would submit is, that in this part of the clause, instead of being one year's rent in arrear, it should be two. I would not ask the Committee to insert anything in the Bill which could possibly injure the landlord; but it would be no disadvantage to the landlord to let the rent run for two years, for the tenant could then be evicted, and there would be plenty left on his holding with which the landlord could recoup himself for the two years' rent. If the tenant is allowed only one year, it might result in oppressive measures being sometimes taken, especially if the tenant might have made himself disagreeable to the landlord or anyone else.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 10, leave out the word "one," and insert the word "two." — *(Dr. R. McDonald.)*

Question proposed, "That the word 'one' stand part of the Clause."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): I think it is, perhaps, desirable that the clause, as it stands, should be better understood by the Committee before they proceed further to deal with the Amendment. The proposal of the hon. Member is to substitute "two" years for "one." Now, if the word "two" is substituted for "one," the effect undoubtedly will be to disable the landlord from taking any step whatever against his tenant; he will have no power whatsoever over the property, and he will have no remedy to gain possession of his land. It must be apparent to the Committee that that is a proposal of a somewhat extreme character.

Dr. R. McDONALD: He will simply be prevented from evicting the tenant.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND: If the Committee substitute "two" for "one," the effect will be that the landlord would have no power to regain possession of the land. His hands would be absolutely tied, so that he could take no step whatever until two full years elapsed, during which no rent payment was made at all. I think the Committee will see that the clause, as it stands, is not a severe clause on the crofter. In the first place, the landlord can do nothing in the way of removing the tenant for non-payment of rent until a full year has elapsed. In that respect the clause will put the crofters in a much more favourable position than that of any ordinary agricultural tenant in Scotland; because, by the existing law, if the tenant falls six months in arrear, the landlord can take steps to initiate proceedings with the object of removing the tenant at the end of a year. But, under the clause as it stands, I should like the Committee to understand the exact position if the crofter at the end of the year is unable to pay his rent. I will assume that the rent he is paying is a fair rent, and that it has been fixed under the Act. The tenant has, therefore, no ground for retaining the rent because it is exorbitant. After a year elapsed what will happen will be this. If the rent is not paid the crofter must either pay it, or he will, under the clause, be entitled to go to the landlord and say—"I am not able to pay now; but I will give security for the past year's rent and for this next year's rent." If the crofter does that, then the hands of the landlord are tied until the expiration of the second year. Keeping these points in view, the Committee, I think, will not approve of any step being taken to give a right to anyone to occupy the land of the landlord without paying any rent at all. I believe that the crofters themselves do not wish to occupy the land on any other condition than the payment of a fair rent. Suppose a crofter had not paid a year's rent, and he cannot find security, what good, or what possible justice would there be in giving him another year's possession, which, under the circumstances, would necessarily imply that he would not be able to pay the second year's rent? But at the end of the year, if he can offer security, he will be entitled to remain, and cannot be removed. This is a somewhat technical clause; but I hope hon. Gentlemen will see that the arrangement is one which will work very favourably to the crofter; that he will get six months' longer credit than any other agricultural tenant in Scotland; and the only effect of adopting the Amendment proposed by my hon. Friend would be that the crofter would be able to retain possession for two years without paying rent, and with no prospect of paying it.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I certainly think there is a good deal of danger in the use of the expression "arrears." I have no wish to delay the clause; but I think that at an earlier stage of the Bill my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate said that the very important question of the existing arrears would have to be dealt with somewhere. I do not see any Amendment on the Paper by which it is proposed to deal with it; and I should like to know from the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate whether he proposes to deal with it in this clause, or at some subsequent stage of the Bill in some other clause?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): The arrears to which my hon. Friend refers are arrears which have accrued before the Act would come into operation. My right hon. and learned Friend had in view arrears of another character, which will have to be dealt with, and in regard to which an Amendment has been placed on the Paper by the hon. Member for East Fifeshire (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear). This clause merely deals with rent which will become past due after the Act comes into operation.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I should like the Committee to understand what the real advantage is which this clause offers to the crofters. According to the Agricultural Holdings Act which was passed three years ago the tenant in Scotland gets no grace whatever. When the six months have expired, on that day the rent becomes payable, and if it is not paid the landlord can take proceedings of ejectment against the tenant. The tenant can only retain possession of the holding by giving security for the past due rent and also for the coming rent. The crofter is now to have that credit of six months refused, and the landlord will be able to take action of removal, as the crofters' rents are to be made payable yearly, immediately at the end of the year if the rent is not paid, even on the day on which it becomes due. The very next day the landlord can call him before the Sheriff and eject him, unless he is able to give security, not only for the past due rent, but for a year's rent to come. I think it only fair, therefore, that the crofters should have at least 12 months' credit. [The Solicitor General for Scotland: Hear, hear!] But you do not give him six months' credit.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND: Yes; we do.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: I am not at all clear about that. According to the Bill, the tenant is to be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act; and supposing that a tenant fails to pay his rent for six months the rent then becomes due, and the landlord, according to this clause, can come in and take steps either to remove the tenant or to require him to find security. I quite understand that the tenant is to have the use of the holding for 12 months. He is then to be called upon to pay, and if he is found to be in arrear his landlord can take proceedings against him. If the rent is payable half-yearly, the tenant may be said to get credit for the first six months; but if it is only payable yearly, then the crofter will receive no credit at all. I would suggest that instead of 12 months the period fixed should be a year and a-half, and in that case the crofter would only get six months' credit.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND: This is a somewhat technical matter, and I am not surprised that my hon. Friend (Mr. J. W. Barclay) is not quite familiar with the details of it, as they are very difficult to understand. But I think that the result which my hon. Friend contemplates is effected by the clause as it stands. The clause provides that the removal of the crofter is to be effected in the manner provided by Section 27 of the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883. Now, what the Agricultural Holdings Act does is this—if more than six months' rent is past due, it enables the landlord to proceed for the removal of the tenant; but it is necessary that he should apply to the Court, so that if the tenant owes six months' rent and does not pay, it is competent for the landlord, say, at the end of the month of May, to take proceedings for his removal; but the removal cannot take place until the Martinmas Term, so that, in reality, before the tenant can be removed, a year's rent will be due. Suppose the crofter enters and a year has expired, and a year's rent is due, it is then competent for the landlord to get a degree of removal for the next term, say at Martinmas; but that would be 18 months after the tenant's entry; or, in other words, he would have the benefit of 18 months' credit. I think that meets the very case my hon. Friend has suggested, and it shows that we have really adopted the proposal of my hon. Friend, which he suggests as a proper method of dealing with the question.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: I think the case is exactly as I stated it. A tenant for 12 months cannot be ejected until the Martinmas following; but you can eject him then, and if he is not able to provide security for the past due rent he forfeits the fixity of tenure you profess to give him in his holding. The question, after all, is that the landlord can take proceedings for the removal of the tenant whenever six months' rent is past due. [The Solicitor General for Scotland: No.] I adhere to what I said. The tenant enters at Whitsuntide, and he remains until the following Whitsuntide, which makes 12 months' rent due; but he can be ejected at Martinmas following, so that, in reality, he gets six months' credit. And it must not be forgotten that the landlord has the security of the crop upon the ground for the due payment of the rent. My own opinion is that the crofter should have 18 months instead of 12 months, and the landlord would then only be giving him six months' credit after the first 12 months' rent became due.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): The clause, as it stands, certainly confers a very substantial advantage upon the crofter. Read in conjunction with the rent, it has additional advantages. In the first place, if it stood alone, it would defer the possibility of an eviction as has been explained by my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General for Scotland; but, in the second place, it is made to apply not to the rack-rent or to a rent under contract, but to the rent which the tenant can have settled at his own pleasure, by applying to the Land Commission. I think it is important the Committee should observe that this section does not apply to the question of arrears at all, because the word rent in the 3rd section is interpreted by Clause 4, and Clause 4 provides that—

> "The rent payable, as one of the statutory conditions, shall be the present rent, that is to say, the yearly rent, including money, and any prestations other than money, payable for the year current at the passing of the Act unless and until the present rent is altered in manner provided by the Act."

The rent, accordingly, is the existing rent, as long the crofter does not choose to go to the Land Court. Therefore, the immunity incurred by the crofter is a double one—namely, that of having the period for the payment of his rent postponed, and that he can have the rent itself settled by the Court.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): In order to make the matter clear, I would ask the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland to add the words "accruing due" after the word "holding" in line 10 of the clause. The clause ought to read—

> "When one year's rent of the holding, accruing due after the passing of this Act, but less than two years' rent is due and unpaid, the crofter shall be liable to be removed."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): I do not think there is any ambiguity about the matter. Being in arrear means the rent past due, and the meaning of the term rent is settled by a succeeding clause. I do not think there can be any ambiguity whatever about the clause as it stands.

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I have no desire to press the Amendment; but am quite ready to withdraw it in favour of one which will come on later, and which stands in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark).

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I have now to move to amend the clause by striking out all the proposed provisions for the manner of removal in order to insert the following words:—

> "To provide that the tenant should be removed summarily unless, on demand, he either tenders payment of, or finds security for, the arrears of rent. But, provided that such removal shall in no way affect the outgoing or compensation for improvements to which in law or practice he otherwise could lay claim."

The system of eviction which prevails in Scotland is based on a very old Act—the Act of Sederunt of 1756. Now, it is important to bear in mind that this is not an Act of the British Parliament, but an Act passed in Session by the Judges of the Supreme Court of Scotland; and the Lord Advocate, I maintain, must know that it is highly unconstitutional, and unfit to be adopted as the basis of any legislation in the year 1886. Moreover, this Act recites that it was passed in the interests of agriculture, and the Judges sheltered the operation of the Act under the pretended plea of a benefit to agriculture; but it came out after that the Judges were afraid the landlords would not get their rent, and enacted that when one year's rent was due and unpaid the Judge Ordinary could call on the tenant to find security, not only for the arrears of rent, but for five years' rent in addition, and if the tenant failed to do so he could be removed without compensation. When two years' rent was unpaid, no amount of tender of payment or of security could stay eviction, and the tenant could be summarily evicted. The Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883, however, reduced the term; but it only gives the tenant the benefit of compensation, without any security against removal. I would ask the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate what principle of justice there is in asking anyone to find security for a payment which has never become due, because the proposal contained in this clause is not only that he should give security for the payment of arrears, but for one year's rent in addition. Upon what principle of justice is the tenant to give any such security? I challenge the right hon. and learned Gentleman to show that there is such a penal enactment against any class of the community. This Bill allows eviction when one year's rent remains unpaid, unless the tenant finds security for it and for another year's rent in addition; and if there are two years' rent on the holding due and unpaid, then the tenant can be evicted. Further, if he cannot find the security, then he will lose all the outgoings and compensation which are due to him. You say that—

> "He is liable to be removed in the manner provided by the fourth section of the Act of Sederunt anent Removing of the fourteenth day of December, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six;"

and that Act of Sederunt decidedly deprives a tenant, who is removed under these circumstances, of all the advantages of compensation. I think it is quite evident that if there is any intention to do justice to the crofters, they should not be required to give security for rent which is not already due; and it is on that ground that I propose the Amendment, and call on all those who have any feeling of justice for the crofters to support it.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 10, to leave out "but less than two years' rent."—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. ASHER) (Elgin, &c.): It is only right, in the first place, that I should correct a misapprehension under which my hon. Friend is labouring—namely, that the effect of the clause, as it stands, would be to remove the tenant at the end of two years, if he has not paid his rent, without giving him the benefit of his improvements. My hon. Friend has overlooked the provisions of Clause 8, which expressly provide that when the crofter renounces his tenancy, or is removed from his holding, he should be entitled to compensation for any permanent improvements. Undoubtedly, the Bill provides that he shall only be removed on getting all the compensation which is due to an outgoing tenant, just the same as if he renounced his tenancy and were going away of his own accord. My hon. Friend says it is a great anomaly that a person who owes to his landlord a certain sum of money should be required to find security, not only for what is past due, but for something which is to become due. But my hon. Friend has not observed anything in the Bill which requires the crofter to do that. The clause simply gives a privilege which is to apply in the case of a man who owes an arrear of rent, and says that he is unable to pay it. If he cannot pay it, of course the alternative is either that he must hold the landlord's land without paying rent for it, or he must do something to find reasonable security that he will not only pay what is past due, but that he will pay in the future. Instead of suffering the penalty of being evicted for non-payment of rent, he is offered the alternative of finding security for the past year and for the ensuing year. He is then entitled to say to his landlord—"I cannot pay the rent past due; but I have a statutory right to remain on the holding for another year." It is impossible to think that that can be otherwise than beneficial and highly favourable to the interests of the crofters. My hon. Friend has entered into a historical question in regard to the Act of Sederunt of 1756. I do not think that we should advance very much the consideration of the Bill by going into the historical question which my hon. Friend has raised. I quite agree with my hon. Friend that it was rather a high-handed proceeding on the part of the Court of Session at the time it was passed; but its provisions have been recognized as being so beneficial in the way of clearing up the state of the law at the time as regarded mere procedure, that they have, by universal consent, accorded the same authority as if passed by public Statute. I hope that the consideration of the clause will not be complicated by entering into the question in regard to which I know that many of my friends in Scotland entertain strong opinions.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I cannot altogether follow the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for St. Rollox, Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch). He proposes to substitute for the period of arrears which shall render a crofter liable to be removed two years instead of one; but I see that the last paragraph of the clause provides that—

> "When two years' rent of the holding is due and unpaid, or when the crofter has broken any

of the other statutory conditions, he shall forfeit his tenancy, and shall be liable to be removed in manner provided by the fourth section of the Act of Sederunt anent Removing of the fourteenth day of December, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six."

Now, if hon. Members will take the 8th clause of the Bill, they will find a provision that when a crofter renounces his tenancy, or is removed from his holding, he shall be entitled to compensation for any permanent improvements, provided that the improvements are suitable to the holding; and even in this 3rd clause the clearest possible distinction is drawn between the term "removal" and the term "forfeit." If the term "forfeit" means anything, it means that the tenant is to be bundled out. If only one year's rent is due, he is only liable to be removed; but the last part of the clause distinctly declares that if he is two years' rent in arrear he is to forfeit his holding. Now, in the Irish Land Act of 1881 provision was made that the tenant should be compensated for improvements on his removal, no matter what the circumstances were which led to the removal; and I do not see why there should not be a similar provision here.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. ASHER) (Elgin, &c.): In reply to the objection which has been raised by the hon. Member, I may say that no landlord will have the power of displacing a tenant without first giving a formal notice of removal; and Clause 8 makes it perfectly clear that he will be compensated in case of removal for any permanent improvements he may have effected.

MR. CHANCE: In regard to the question now before the Committee—namely, the desirability of substituting two years for one, I admit at once that if there are arrears of less than two years the tenant would get the benefit of compensation for permanent improvements; but what I fear is that as the Bill is now worded, if two years' rent are due and unpaid, the crofter in arrear might be compelled to forfeit the holding. [The LORD ADVOCATE: Read line 16.]—

"Shall forfeit his tenancy, and shall be liable to be removed in manner provided by the fourth section of the Act of Sederunt anent Removing of the fourteenth day of December, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six."

But, in the event of the forfeiture of his tenancy, I think it is as clear as daylight that he would not get the benefit of his improvements.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): As this is a question of construction, I think it is right that I should, as a lawyer, affirm the reading of my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General—namely, that what is to be forfeited under this clause is the tenancy, and that what is not to be forfeited is the compensation. The penalty under this clause of non-payment of rent is the forfeiture of the tenancy or the liability to be removed; and if a man is removed by Clause 8 he gets compensation.

MR. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): What is the meaning of the reference in the clause to the Act of Sederunt of 1756, under which both outgoings and compensation are forfeited?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. ASHER) (Elgin, &c.): What that Act does is merely to prescribe the manner in which the process of removal is to be carried out. The Act of Sederunt substituted for a much more elaborate and technical proceeding before the Supreme Court a simple process of removal before a Judge Ordinary. The reference to the old Act simply supplies the machinery which is laid down there, instead of instituting another process. I think the hon. Member would be conferring a left-handed benefit on the crofters if he were to strike out the reference to the Act of Sederunt.

MR. M'CULLOCH: I am satisfied with the explanation.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

DR. CLARK (Caithness): The Amendment which I rise to move is not proposed for the purpose of enabling a crofter who cannot pay his rent to remain in his holding, but to meet the case of a crofter who is unable to pay owing to innocent misfortune. We ask that the question shall come before the Court, and that by the consent of the Court only the crofter shall be removed, and that the matter shall not be left in the hands of the landlord or his factor. We prefer that no eviction shall take place, except by consent of the Court, and that the Court which considers the case should be a Court of Equity.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 11, after "crofter," insert "by consent of the Court."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): It is quite impossible that we can assent to the introduction of these words, which we believe would be not only mischievous, but productive of no benefit at all to the crofter. There never can be any case of removal which does not involve an application to the Court; because, under all circumstances, the person sought to be removed would have the right of applying to the Court. If the crofter is put in his position at a fair rent, it is not right surely to say that the landlord, without the consent of the Court, should not have the right to recover possession of his land, the crofter not being able to pay the rent or give security.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I propose not to move the Amendment with regard to arrears which stands in my name, because I understand that some arrangement will be made with regard to arrears by the Government. Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will explain what the arrangement is.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): There is an Amendment in the name of the hon. Member to Clause 6, which, with, perhaps, some necessary modification, will in substance be adopted, subject to the decision of the Committee.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 4 (Present rent).

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I ask, by the Amendment I propose to move, that the words "including money and any prestations other than money" may be omitted from this clause. The object of the Amendment is to prevent there being any personal service, prestations, or the like, included in the rent payable as one of the statutory conditions. It is a very hard thing for a crofter who wants to work his own croft to have to work on the farm of a large tacksman, and render other feudal duties; and my wish is to prevent his having to do anything but pay the rent.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 22, to leave out from "including" to "money," in line 24, inclusive.—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): This portion of the clause simply deals with the present rent. It merely says that the prestations on the part of the tenant shall be included in the rent payable as one of the statutory conditions. Supposing that the rent now due by a crofter is partly in respect of money and partly in respect of service, the Committee will see that in such case it would be impossible for us to assent to the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 5 (Rent altered by agreement).

Mr. BAIRD (Lanark, N.W.): I rise to move the Amendment to this clause which stands in my name, with the idea of getting the opinion of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate as to whether the clause would not be made clearer to the non-legal mind by inserting the words which I propose.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 3, line 30, after "and," to leave out to end of line 31 and insert, "no rent shall have been fixed by the Land Commission."—(*Mr. Baird.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I feel the force of the criticism suggested by this Amendment, which I am bound to say is a sound criticism. I agree that it is necessary to insert some words to show clearly that one rent is to be substituted for another; and, therefore, we propose to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member with the addition of some words which will make it more clear. We propose to insert after "no" the word "different," and at the end of the hon. Member's Amendment to add, "upon the application of the landlord or of the crofter;" that, we think, will make the matter perfectly clear.

Amendments proposed to the proposed Amendment,

After the word "no" to insert the word "different," and at the end to add the words "upon application of the landlord or of the crofter."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 6 (Fixed rent).

DR. CLARK (Caithness): The next Amendment in my name is intended to prevent the rack-renting of an incoming tenant, either by the crofter or the landlord. There are two rents—the arbitration rent and the competition rent. As the clause at present stands, the incoming tenant will derive no benefit from the Bill, because he would be rack-rented.

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, line 33, after "crofter," insert "or anyone about to become the tenant of a crofter's holding."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. ASHER) (Elgin, &c.): These words seem to me to be altogether inadmissible, because they would make the Bill applicable to the crofter who entered into a new arrangement with the landlord. It is out of the question that the new crofter should, perhaps upon terms voluntarily arranged between himself and the landlord, have the power to go the next day into the Land Court for the purpose of having a fair rent fixed; that, I think, would be hardly satisfactory.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I wish to make it clear that the agents of the parties may be heard by the Commissioners as well as the principals. I am aware that under the Scotch law the word "parties" would embrace agents and others who represent those who are parties to the suit; but it may be supposed that the Commissioners will not all be lawyers, and it is possible, therefore, that the Court may not at all times be aware of the significance and meaning of the word "parties." I hope the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will admit these words, which will have no other effect than to make the clause clearer than it is at present.

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, line 36, after the word "parties," insert the words "or their duly accredited agents."—(*Mr. Mark Stewart.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I hope the hon. Gentleman will not press this Amendment. These words are altogether unnecessary, inasmuch as the term "parties" is perfectly well understood to include agents.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): The Amendment I propose to move affects the definition of fair rents, and the question is one of serious importance. I regret that the expressions in the clause as it stands in the Bill are insufficient and misleading; and I propose to substitute for such definition words which I conceive will express more adequately the duty of the Land Commission in the work they will have to undertake. I desire to say, at the outset, that my argument proceeds necessarily on the assumption that this statutory body is to fix what it considers to be a proper rent for the holding. What is the fair rent that ought to be fixed? I take it that it is that rent which a solvent tenant would pay for the holding as it stands; and, accordingly, the question which has to be determined by the Land Commission is really one of valuation. They have to look at the subject, measure its worth, and fix upon that figure as the rent to be paid in future—that is, a sum which the tenant can afford to pay as rent. I ought to add to that one qualification relating to compensation for improvements, because I accede to the view that you are not to take the fair rent—the worth of the subject as it stands—without taking into account the proportion, if any, by which the value has been created by the improvements of the tenant. I am not certain that there is a difference of opinion between the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite and myself on that point; but I am very anxious to hear in the sequel whether there is or not. I should like to know whether he assents to the view that, subject to the ascertainment of improvements made by the tenant, the problem is to find out what is the amount which a solvent tenant can afford for rent in respect of a particular holding? If that is not the view of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, then I want to know by how much less is the rent to be fixed, or what is the ultimate deduction to be made; if that is not his view, then I say frankly that I dissent from the proposal of the Government. But I think the difference between the right hon. and learned Gentleman and myself is more as to the method of determining what is the proper rent; and I think the clause withdraws the attention of the Land Commission too much from the value of the holding to a number of extraneous and collateral circumstances. If that be the case, then I believe that the Committee will feel with me that that the clause is not fitly framed in order to the attainment of the result which we all desire. I shall point out words to which I take exception. I think it a misfortune that the Commission is directed by the words here used to consider all the "circumstances of the case, holding, and district." I must say that I assume that any valuer, apart from this Act, would necessarily take into consideration the circumstances of the holding and district; he would take into consideration not merely the quality of the soil, but those circumstances which enable a tenant to pay a particular rent—that is to say, the distance from markets, communications, &c. Those, Sir, are circumstances of the holding; but the clause says that the Commissioners are to take into account something which is apparently different from that—"the circumstances of the case;" and I want to know what those circumstances are? Is there a different set of circumstances; are the circumstances of the case different and distinct from the circumstances of the holding? The Committee will observe that the words "circumstances of the case" have a certain latitude, and are so extremely popular that they may, even in the view of a Court of Law, render legitimate an inquiry into circumstances which have little or no bearing upon the value of the holding; and that observation becomes more cogent, if I may say so, when it is considered that the Court is to consist of two laymen and one lawyer, who are to interpret and apply the section. From the latitude usually given to the words, I fear that the Commissioners might think themselves justified in considering not only the question of the value of the holding, but the ability of the tenant to occupy and pay for it; it might even be held to justify an inquiry as to whether the landlord had need of the rent, and a number of considerations which are highly illegitimate; whereas, when we are appointing a Commission to novel and unprecedented work, there ought, I think to be no words of a misleading character put into the clause intended to guide them in coming to a determination. Another point should be kept in view. This fair rent is a permanency for 15 years, and accordingly it will be completely out of the question, if justice is to be done, that attention should be paid to transient considerations. What, then, are the circumstances of the case? We observe that this rent is not to bind merely the existing tenant, but it is to bind his heirs, and that for a period of 15 years. I think the duty of the Legislature should be to give fixed instructions to the Commission from which they cannot hold aloof; and I am of opinion that the Commission should determine what is the rent at which, one year with another, the holding might in its actual state be reasonably expected to let from year to year. I should like to anticipate one of the answers which may be made to my proposal, and that is that the words I am taking objection to are the words of the Irish Land Act. Although that is an answer, I do not consider it a good answer; because the condition and circumstances of the tenants in the two cases of Ireland and Scotland are totally different. The rights of the Irish tenants in their holdings are of a character to which those in the case of Scotland have no analogy. My second answer to the expected argument in support of the clause is, that the working of the Irish Land Act has not been such as to satisfy any of the parties concerned; and if it be true that we should not adopt a misleading precedent, then we should not adopt the phraseology of the Irish Act. Another thing is said, and that is that we are to trust to the Land Commission. Certainly, when this measure has become the law of the land I shall be willing to do so; but, before giving the Land Commission *carte blanche* to consider all the circumstances of the case, and before withholding from them a plain direction as to what is the fair rent, I should like to know a little more about its constitution. I think we are entitled to know from the right hon. and learned Gentleman something more on that subject. All we know now is, that one of the members of the Commission is to be an advocate of 10 years' standing. Well, Sir, I need hardly say that I have a great respect for advocates of 10 years' standing; but I do not find in that an absolute guarantee which would incline me to throw the reins upon the neck of a tribunal presided over even by so august a personage. I remind the right hon. and learned Gentleman that there are advocates of 10 years' standing and advocates of 10 years' standing, and it is most important for us to know that means are to be taken to insure that the Commission is a strong one. I should be prepared to abstain from pressing for too sharp a definition of "fair rent" if we were abundantly satisfied as to the composition of the Land Commission. Unless the Land Commission is an especially strong one there will be, I fear, under the clause as it now stands, an inclination to wander into such considerations as what a good or bad, popular or unpopular, landlord might do for his tenants; and that, I submit, is not the duty of a Body constituted like this. The Commissioners should proceed in the performance of this duty on plain and intelligent principles. I have said that the Government might give us some assurances upon this subject; but I need hardly add that I will not press them upon a question which will necessarily arise at a later stage of the Bill. Still, I think we are fairly entitled to know something about the arrangements which will be made for the constitution of the tribunal—or, rather, administering Body—which will be intrusted with this matter.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): Mr. Courtney, I rise to Order. I should like to know whether the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Robertson) can, in moving an Amendment to a clause, discuss other clauses of the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin): It appears to me there is a relation between Clause 6 and the remarks of the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I fear, Sir, that the whole point of my argument has been missed by the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Clark). I say that the permissibility of the words of the section is partly to be determined by the question—Who are those who are to constitute the Commission? I hope the Committee will understand that my Amendments are not proposed in any spirit of hostility to the operation of this system. On the contrary, I think the one thing to be guarded against is a roving Commission with no settled ideas, perplexing people, throwing doubts, and raising, it may be, vain expectations in the minds of one party or the other—a Commission, above all, which would not have before it its sailing directions in the shape of plain, intelligible definitions of fair rent. I am most anxious to know from the Government two things. In the first place, I want to know whether, upon principle, they dissent from the explanation of "fair rent" which I have put on the Paper; if they do, I am entitled to know wherein, and to what extent, do they differ; and, secondly, I want to know, in a sufficiently general manner, what is to be the composition of the Land Commission which is to administer this very difficult clause?

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 36, after "parties," leave out to before "may" in line 40."—(*Mr. J. P. B. Robertson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'and considering all the circumstances of the case,' stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): There can be no doubt of the importance of the question raised by my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson); and it is perfectly reasonable, I think, that the discussion should now be taken, as he proposes, not only on the particular Amendment which he has moved, but also upon the one that stands further down the Paper in his name, by which he makes a suggestion of a very different character, as to what the rule for determining the rent shall be; because, no doubt, the proposal to strike out the Government's direction and the proposal to substitute the hon. and learned Gentleman's direction must be considered together. But before I deal with the hon. and learned Gentleman's Amendment, let me say a word or two upon another question into which my hon. and learned Friend entered quite legitimately—namely, the question of the composition of the Land Commission. Now, I entirely agree with him that the Commission should be a thoroughly strong Commission, and a Commission which shall be so constituted as to inspire confidence in all the very numerous persons who will be interested in its administration. I, of course, am not in a position at this moment to mention the names of the persons, for a very obvious reason. I do not know whether I should be revealing a secret in saying that we are not in a position to mention the names of the persons who will constitute the Commission, because these persons have not yet been fixed upon. I need scarcely say that it will be a most difficult matter to select persons possessing the requisite qualifications. That can only be done after endeavouring to get the best information that can be obtained from all parts of Scotland as to the class of persons who would be likely to be best qualified for Commissioners, particularly for the two lay Commissioners. The selection of the Commissioners is an extremely delicate duty, no doubt; but I think the Committee will be, for the present, at all events, indisposed to delay the clause on that account—at least, we on the part of the Government are fairly entitled to discuss this clause—and, indeed, every other clause—on the assumption that the Commission will be a properly and duly constituted Commission. Having said this, and fully appreciating the great delicacy and the great importance of the duties which will be cast upon the Commission, I shall now, very shortly, deal with my hon. and learned Friend's proposal, firstly, to strike out our instruction to the Commission, and, secondly, to substitute his own instruction. He was quite right in anticipating that one answer we should make in regard to our instruction—for such it is—is that it was inserted, and, I recollect very well, inserted after much discussion, in the Irish Land Act. Here are the words—the words which my hon. and learned Friend criticized so much — "considering all the circumstances of the case, holding, and district." Now, the words at the end of Sub-section (1) of Clause 8 of the Irish Act are—

> "Considering all the circumstances of the case, holding, and district, may determine what is such fair rent."

Those words were adopted after very full discussion, and for reasons which I shall not be justified in wearying the Committee by repeating now. Any hon. Gentleman who desires to see them stated in detail can do so by perusing the volumes of *Hansard.* I must, however, indicate why it appears to us that it is wise to introduce some such instruction. I do not say that the mere fact of such an instruction having been introduced into an Act similar or identical in purpose is conclusive; but I do say it goes a long way to justify its insertion in this Bill; because when Parliament, so very recently as five years ago, after an exceedingly full discussion, thought that this was a wise and proper instruction, some respect should be paid to this decision, unless it can be shown, either that it was a wrong instruction, or that it has broken down in its working, or that it is inappropriate, owing to some difference in the conditions of the persons affected or the subjects dealt with by the two pieces of legislation. Now, my hon. and learned Friend anticipated this observation, and he said that the circumstances of the Irish small tenants and those of the Scotch crofter tenants are different, and he referred to some differences which have already been discussed during the progress of this Bill. There has been a difference pointed out in the law of assignment, and we resisted free sale upon that and other grounds; but I am not aware that there has been any difference pointed out between the two groups of tenants, in so far as the question of fair rent is concerned. I know of no reason why an instruction which would be appropriate to those who were to determine what was fair rent for the Irish small tenants should not also be an appropriate instruction to those who have the same duty to perform in Scotland. I believe there is a great deal of similarity in many respects between the Irish small tenants and the Scotch crofters. There is a very vast difference between the condition of the Irish small tenant and what I may call the normal tenant of Scotland, who holds under perfectly free contract, and under social and economic conditions altogether different from those which obtain in the

Highlands. But there is, to begin with, a similarity of race between the crofters in the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland and the Irish; a great deal of similarity in the conditions by which they are surrounded; their habits of life are similar; their poverty is similar; their pursuits are very similar; and their climate is very similar. In short, there is a great deal of similarity between the conditions that surround the two peoples; if it had not been for the great similarity in these respects I am not sure that we should have proposed this Bill. We do not propose the Bill for Scotland generally; because we think there are certain conditions existing in the Highlands which make it right and proper there, although it would not be right and proper elsewhere, and these conditions are very analogous and similar to those existing amongst the small tenants of Ireland. My hon. and learned Friend asks, and quite rightly, why should we give this instruction? Well, in regard to that I have to say, in the first place, that if you sent persons about with a roving Commission to fix fair rents, and gave them no kind of hint as to what they were to do, they might be all at large—all at sea; they might think they should fix rents upon some general principle without regard to the particular circumstances. One man might say that he thought the rent of the whole county or parish should be 30*s*. an acre. They might have general views of that kind; and, therefore, it is appropriate now, as it was in 1881, to direct the Commission not to do things *en bloc*, but to have regard to the circumstances surrounding the particular case which they had in hand. And so the Commission is told to have regard to the "circumstances of the case, holding, and district." Well, my hon. and learned Friend gave instances which he thought might fall under the circumstances of the case; but I do not think that any valuer would include them in that category. My hon. and learned Friend gave, as the first instance, the personal inability of the particular tenant to pay, and the necessity, the wealth, or the poverty of the landlord. These are certainly not circumstances which appear to me as right to take into consideration. But, suppose a given rent was proposed to be fixed for a holding, and that the tenant said it was too high, and proved that the three tenants who had been sitting before him at that rent had become bankrupt. There is a circumstance of the case. If experience proved that the rent could not be paid, I say it would be a very pertinent consideration. Of course, if there had been any improvidence on the part of the former tenants that would also be considered. Well, then, suppose one holding was near a steamboat quay and another 10 miles inland. The Commissioners would consider how the holdings were situated, their distance from market, their facilities for bringing materials to and from, and all the other things which make one holding more valuable than another. Then there are the circumstances of the district. There are districts and districts. The climate forms one important element in the consideration and the means of communication another. In short, the object of such an instruction as we propose is practically to indicate to the Commissioners that they shall specialize their investigations, so that they shall do justice upon a review of the circumstances affecting the particular place. Well, then, it is quite true that we have added something which I did not understand my hon. and learned Friend to object to; because there is something very like it in his own alternative Amendment. It will be seen that we use the word "particularly." We say—

> "And particularly after taking into consideration any permanent improvements on the holding which may have been executed by the crofter or his predecessor in the same family."

Now, Sir, I say there is a circumstance of the case. These words are used to prevent the crofter from being rented on his own improvements. This provision is to lead to such things as this being considered—Suppose that the holding as it stands is worth a particular figure—say, £6 a-year—it would then be legitimate for the crofter to say—"That is all very well; that croft is worth £6 as it now stands; but it would only be worth £3 if it were not for the improvements that I and my predecessors in my family have made." There is a circumstance of the case, and I apprehend that, as to the justice of inquiring into such a circumstance, there will be no question. So I venture to submit it is right and proper that there should be instructions if you like, or, if you prefer it, hints or suggestions, which are likely to lead to a careful consideration by the Commissioners of the particulars affecting the holding they have to value, and that these words should stand here as they have stood in other places. Probably the propriety of this instruction may be best illustrated by taking into view the alternative instruction that my hon. and learned Friend proposes. He proposes to substitute for our instruction this—

> "The fair rent shall be the rent at which one year with another such holding might in its actual state be reasonably expected to let from year to year;"

and then his instruction goes on to refer to permanent improvements. Now, Sir, I am perfectly aware that these words are taken from an Act with which we are all familiar — namely, the Lands Valuation Act of 1854. It is quite true that that Act provides a convenient mode of defining value. For many purposes — and in particular for purposes of rating—it is convenient; but I submit to the Committee that the words the hon. and learned Gentleman proposes might not only be inconvenient words, but misleading words, as applied to the duty which the Land Commission may have to perform. One of the great evils in the Highlands—in those parts of the Highlands which will be affected by this Bill—as in Ireland, is the congestion or overcrowding of the population in particular places and the great desire to possess land. Now, if my hon. and learned Friend's Amendment were accepted there would be a direction to the Commissioners which I may venture to paraphrase thus—"Never mind what you think the real value is, whether the man can live or thrive upon the land, either by working it alone, or with any other labour he may get, either on shore or by fishing; if you think somebody can be got to give a certain figure, fix that as the rent." I admit that, when you are dealing with competition under normal conditions, it is probably the fairest test of value; but it does appear to me that, when dealing with an impoverished population, to fix the rent upon the basis of what might be offered, irrespective of whether the people could pay it or not, might lead to great injustice, and might result in a rent being fixed which would not be a fair rent, but an unfair rent—a rent which the tenant, with all he could get out of the land, and what he could get from fishing or some other industry, never could pay. I say that to give an instruction like that would be wrong. I will give the Committee another illustration of how it appears to me this direction of my hon. and learned Friend might work. His suggestion is that—

> "The fair rent shall be the rent at which, one year with another, such holding might in its actual state be reasonably expected to let from year to year."

Well, there are several competitors who compete for land in the Highlands besides the ordinary inhabitants. Suppose the tenant of a neighbouring deer forest wanted to square his marches, and said—"This forest would be worth another £1,000 a-year if I could get such and such a bit of land," he might, under the instruction of the hon. and learned Gentleman, get land wanted by the crofter; it might be said that the price offered was the price the land would reasonably fetch. Suppose a landlord wanted certain land with which to improve his sheep farm, there might be a fancy value put upon the land, a value having no relation whatever to human habitation, or occupation, or cultivation. This is no fanciful illustration. I do not believe that the hon. and learned Gentleman desires to produce any such result as I have described; but when you use the words—

> "The fair rent shall be the rent at which, one year with another, such holding might in its actual state be reasonably expected to let from year to year,"

what is to exclude the competition of the man who wants to square his deer forest? I submit that it would not be right, for reasons which, I believe, will commend themselves to the judgment and conscience of the Committee, to give a direction which would bring in competition of the kind I have indicated. I could not help hearing the remark of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mark Stewart) to my hon. and learned Friend, to the effect that the word "reasonably" appears in the Amendment. It is true the Amendment does contain the word "reasonably;" but pray notice to what the word is attached. It is not attached to the rent, but to the expectation of getting it. It is not reasonable rent. I may say that when the Irish Land Bill was passing through the House an hon. Friend of mine mentioned a case where, upon an estate with which he was acquainted, instructions had been given to see that the rents were fair rents. On the whole, the rents were found to be fair—indeed, below the valuation; but in one or two cases they were found to be remarkably above the valuation. This was not intended, and the agent was asked to explain why it was so. He said—"Well, the tenant died; he had three sons, all of whom wanted the holding—I could do nothing else but let them compete for it, and they bid it up to nearly twice its value." Now, that is the kind of thing which might happen in the Highlands; that is competition rent; but it is not fair rent. I admit that the instruction of my hon. and learned Friend would be a very proper instruction if applied to Scotland generally, or to places where you have substantial tenants dealing in the open market; but it might be a most dangerous instruction when you are dealing with this very peculiar kind of property. I hope I have given good reasons for the retention of our own clause and the rejection of the Amendment, and I may conclude by adding that while we are in a position to point to the instruction given in the Irish Act of 1881 as similar to ours, my hon. and learned Friend is not in a position to point to any instruction given in that Act, such as he proposes. If my hon. and learned Friend's instruction was an appropriate one, why was it not given by Parliament in 1881? I do believe that one important object which Parliament had in view in fencing and guarding the wording of the clause of the Irish Act of 1881 was the prevention of what might be unreasonable and irrational competition rents being fixed—rents which no man would be able to pay and thrive. I think that it is wise to take the discussion upon my hon. and learned Friend's two Amendments at the same time, and I hope that the Committee will see its way to support the clause as it stands.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I think the Amendment of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bute (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) is very objectionable, and not warranted by anything that appears in the Irish Land Act. But the clause, as it stands at present, is in my opinion, equally objectionable, although I give the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) every credit for his intention to guard against the tenant being taxed for his own improvements. The Irish Land Act has been often cited in the course of the debate. Although the words of that Act are clear, the landlords' contention, which was confirmed by the Court of Appeal in the case of "Adams *v.* Dunseath," is, that in fixing fair rent you must first of all fix the value of the unimproved holding, and that then the improvements must be considered in the light of works done by a partnership to which the tenant brought labour and capital and the landlord contributed some unknown quantity which the Court of Appeal called the improvability of the soil. By that method, under words which are almost similar to those in this Bill, the tenant was taxed for his own improvements.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I think it is well to draw attention to the fact that, in the first place, we are constituting a tribunal to consider all the circumstances of the case. Upon the face of it that is all very well; but then the particular instruction which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) proposes to give to the tribunal is an instruction entirely in favour of one of the parties to the cause. When you instruct the tribunal, as you do by this clause, to take into consideration all the circumstances in favour of the tenants, you impliedly direct them to exclude any circumstances which may exist in favour of the other parties. If credit, so to speak, is to be given to the tenant for any improvements he may have made, surely, when the question of fixing a fair rent is taken into consideration, there should, *per contra*, be taken into consideration any value which the landlord may have given the tenant towards the improvements. Again, are you to exclude from consideration any dilapidations which may have been permitted by the tenant? If you are to give credit to the tenant for any improvements he has made on the one side, surely on the other side he ought to be debited for what he has left undone. But there is another difficulty in which you are landed by this particularization. It directs the tribunal to take into consideration what has been done by the tenant's relatives, notwithstanding that the value of such improvements may have been allowed for years before. I have looked through the Bill to see whether there is any provision in the Act that the power proposed to be given to the landlord and crofter to apply to the Land Commission is one which can be exercised from time to time, and for the particularization of what the tribunal is to consider in considering the question of rent, but I cannot discover either one or the other. I contend that we ought to instruct the tribunal what are the improvements which are to be taken into consideration, and within what period they must have been made. Now, Sir, I come to a question of principle, and, if I understand rightly, a question of principle between the two Front Benches, and that is, what is to be the criterion of value? Is the rent to be fixed by the value of the land, or not? Is the owner to have the full value of his land, or is he not? The value of a thing is the amount it will fetch in the market; but if the Government supersede competition, and close the market, they will be attempting to coerce the natural law of supply and demand, and there will be no end to such a principle. Now, Sir, I do not see a single word from beginning to end of the Bill to the effect that the owner shall have the value of his land in the shape of rent, or even the value to the crofter. The right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, as I understood him, said that the rent should be fixed by reference to the capacity of the crofter to pay.

The LORD ADVOCATE: I said exactly the opposite as to the individual.

Mr. KIMBER: Then I must have misunderstood the right hon. and learned Gentleman. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I trespass very little upon the attention of the House, and when I do, I think hon. Members will admit that I endeavour to economize time as much as possible. I understood the right hon. and learned Gentleman's argument to be that the value of a croft to a rich neighbour might be more than the crofter could pay; but what a particular crofter could pay is nothing at all as to the value of the land. It ought to be the value which any good tenant who would use the land would pay; but the right hon. and learned Gentleman spoke of the particular crofter who might be engaged in fishing, or other employment, and, therefore, might not be able to pay a competitive rent, or a rent which others would pay. Now, Sir, I ask again, what is to be the criterion of value, because there is nothing laid down in the Bill as to the annual value of the land. Is it to be value or not? If not value, then the sooner the Government say so, and announce to the world that they have introduced a principle of taking one man's property and giving it to another on terms which do not represent the value, the better. If, on the other hand, it is to be a value which is not to be open to unlimited competition, I shall be willing to make a concession on the point. But if we are going to interfere with the laws of supply and demand at all, it is the more necessary that we should define the limit of the market within which the value is to be ascertained.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): It appears to me that the speech to which we have just been listening would have been very appropriate if the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Kimber) had made it in 1881, before the Irish Land Act was passed, because it has laid down some general principles — principles which I do not for one moment admit—which have been scattered to the four winds of Heaven during the last few years. But, Sir, I have an Amendment to propose which I think will peculiarly apply to the case of the Scotch Highlands and Islands. After the word "particularly," in line 37 of this clause, I would propose to insert these words—

"Excluding any increased value due to any improvements on the holding which may have been executed by the crofter or his predecessor."

Now, I hope that is an Amendment which will be acceptable both to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate and to the hon. Member who has just spoken. That would be a direction to the Commission that they shall not charge rent on the improvements made by the tenant. We know that the complaint in Ireland has been that, notwithstanding the general instructions which were given, full charges have been made upon the tenants' improvements, and I am anxious that this shall not happen in this case. That is all that I desire—nothing but fair play between the two parties. Let the landlord have that which is his, and let the tenant have that which is his, and the more specific this declaration is, the less litigation we shall have in the future. Now, the Amendment which I have to propose will obviate this difficulty. I will not refer to the argument of the hon. Gentleman opposite, who proposes to remove that limitation from the owners, and to give them *carte blanche* to do as they please.

Mr. KIMBER: I beg your pardon; I proposed nothing of the kind.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I was not speaking in regard to what the hon. Member said, but as to what was said by the hon. and learned Gentleman the ex-Solicitor General for Scotland. (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson). I beg, Sir, to move the Amendment.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin): The hon. Member cannot move an Amendment until the Amendment already before the Committee is disposed of.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Can I not move an Amendment upon an Amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I will not follow the hon. Member who has just spoken into the discussion which he has introduced, and which may come on later; but I wish to say a few words upon the Amendment moved by my hon. and learned Friend. My hon. and learned Friend says, having in view the effect of similar legislation in Ireland, that a clause should be inserted in this Bill for the guidance of the Land Commission in fixing the fair rent which ought to be paid. He desires that the leading principle shall be the rent for which the holding may be reasonably expected to let from year to year to a solvent tenant, putting aside the improvements made upon the holding. That being the principle, my hon. and learned Friend appealed to the Government to state distinctly whether they will accept the principle which he enunciated, or, if they will not, what is the basis upon which, in the view of the Government, fair rent ought to be fixed? The right hon. and and learned Lord Advocate, instead of giving an answer, proceeded, with more or less adroitness, to criticize the Amendment, and to point out the objections to which it might give rise. According to the right hon. and learned Gentleman, the Amendment would lead to competitive rents, and he indicated the case of the neighbouring owner of a deer forest who might be willing to pay £1,000 a-year in order to square his forest. Well, it appears to me that that is not a reasonable argument, because the Amendment merely relates to a croft as a croft, and if there is any difficulty in regard to that matter, no doubt my hon. Friend will consent to the introduction of additional words in order to make it clear. But Her Majesty's Government have given no answer to the question which has been raised by my hon. Friend, and the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has replied instead to some observations that have been made in regard to Ireland, and alleged that there was no reason whatever why a similar restriction as to fair rent should not be laid down for the Land Commission in Scotland as in Ireland. The right hon. and learned Gentleman gave his reasons for stating that there is great similarity between the cases of Ireland and Scotland; but I venture to differ altogether from the right hon. and learned Gentleman, for I am of opinion that there is the widest possible difference between them. The circumstances of Ireland which led to the introduction of a principle which, it was admitted by the Prime Minister (Mr. Gladstone), could only be justified by the peculiar circumstances of the country, and which, if I remember rightly, the Prime Minister stated could not properly be introduced into England or Scotland, were that in Ireland there was a land hunger, leading to a competition which was altogether unknown in the other parts of the Kingdom. The land hunger, which was the chief feature of the peculiar condition of Ireland, produced results by which tenants were willing to give exorbitant rents for their farms. It was stated before a Royal Commission, on which I sat, that a tenant had been actually known to pay as much as 60 years' purchase, in addition to the rent for the goodwill, of a farm of which he became the occupying tenant. But would anybody pretend that anything like that exists in any part of Scotland?

Mr. M. HARRIS (Galway, E.): I do.

Mr. CHAPLIN: At all events, the cry of hon. Gentleman from Ireland was that the population was overcrowded.

Mr. M. HARRIS: Only in special localities.

Mr. CHAPLIN: But can anyone say that anything approaching that state of things exists in any part of Scotland at the present time? What was the complaint of the hon. Gentlemen whom I will call the professional friends of the crofters? During the whole of this debate, their complaint has been that the people have been banished from the country and divorced from the soil, and what they want is to repopulate the country. But there is another great difference to the case of Ireland, and that is that in Ireland the land is the only thing the people have to look to for their living and support. There are no industries in Ireland, except in the extreme North, to which the surplus population could resort for the means of obtaining a livelihood. But everyone who has studied this question knows that in the Highlands there is a great industry, and that is the fishing industry, which all who are acquainted with the circumstances of the country acknowledge ought to be developed as the best means to which the people can look for a profitable existence in the future. Therefore, I think I have proved to the Committee that there is a great distinction between the two countries. The Committee has been told that the Irish legislation at that time was so much and so carefully discussed that we must assume it was wise, and that Parliament acted in a manner which commanded, or ought to command, our support and admiration. Now, I venture to say that the action of Parliament at that time was entirely mistaken. That was my view at the time, and everything that has happened since then has only confirmed me in that opinion. Why, the right hon. Gentleman himself, although he appeared to have believed with the wisdom of that legislation at the time, is not prepared to get up in his place and say that he thinks the Irish legislation of 1881 has been a success. If it has been a success, what is the meaning of the present difficulties and the great crisis we are in with respect to Ireland? It is not necessary for me to say anything more to show that the system of fair rents in Ireland has broken down; and it appears to me that the difficulties of this question, from past experience, are of such a great and important character, that we ought not to leave the fixing of fair rents to the vague instructions which were given in the case of Ireland, and which are given in this Bill also. But if the House of Commons is disposed, and really does intend, to make the experiment, then the least we can do is to give more definite instructions by accepting the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bute (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson).

Mr. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I hope the Committee will not accept the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Bute, the effect of which is to insert in the Bill a direction to the Land Court that they shall take as a fair rent that rent which may be fixed by what is called the higgling of the market, subject only to this consideration—that any improvement executed by the crofter or his predecessor of the same family within 20 years shall not be taken into account for the purpose of enhancing the rent. However appropriate, in other circumstances, the test of the higgling of the market may be in fixing what is a fair rent, it is inconsistent with the whole scope of this legislation that it should be adopted in the case of the Highlands, where there are what are called crofting parishes. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford (Mr. Chaplin) has, I think, felt the force of the criticisms of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate upon the Amendment, because the right hon. Gentleman admits that it is not desirable to include such elements of competition as the Lord Advocate wishes to exclude. A case has been put of a man who is prepared to give a higher price for a croft than anyone else for sporting purposes—the competition of a neighbouring proprietor who wishes to round off his deer forest by securing possession of a croft. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford says that the hon. and learned Member for Bute will be ready to introduce words into his Amendment that will exclude elements of competition of that description. I apprehend that that admission is, however, enough to condemn the Amendment. If my hon. and learned Friend tries to put into definite shape the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, he will find it difficult to exclude those elements of competition which none of us desire to see introduced in that case. I think it would be a far better plan to leave the matter, as proposed in the clause, to the Land Court, giving them a direction to take into account—

> "All the circumstances of the case, and particularly after taking into consideration any permanent improvements on the holding which may have been executed by the crofter or his predecessor of the same family."

That would enable us to get at a result more harmonious with this scheme of legislation than we could attain by leaving the rent to be settled by a form of competition which, in the case with which we are dealing, would be mischievous.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR (Leeds, Central): In answer to the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Finlay), I may say I do not think it would be very difficult to insert words such as would secure us against such competition as he suggests. If we amended the proposed Amendment of the hon. and learned Member (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson), by inserting, after the word "let," in the second line, the words "for agricultural purposes," the clause would read—

> "The fair rent shall be the rent at which, one year with another, such holding might in its natural state be reasonably expected to let for agricultural purposes from year to year;"

That simple alteration, it seems to me, would exclude all dangerous competition. The only kind of dangerous competition that has been suggested is that which would arise where a landlord might want to take a croft into a deer forest, and would be prepared to pay a large sum of money for it. Competition of that kind is, no doubt, greatly to be deprecated. With the words I propose introduced, however, no such danger could possibly arise. I think the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) will be willing to allow the introduction of those words into his Amendment.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I think, as my hon. Friend who has just sat down has remarked, the difficulty could be overcome by the introduction of the words he has suggested, or the objection raised by the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate could be met by the insertion of words importing that the holding is only to be let as a croft, and not as a deer forest. But leaving the question whether minute verbal alterations are or are not required in the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend, and turning to the broad question before the Committee, I am bound to say that I think the point was very unsatisfactorily argued by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate. He began his speech, and finished it, with an appeal to the precedent of the Irish Land Act; and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane) appeared to think that, because the Irish Land Act contained certain words—because the wisdom of Parliament in 1881 had determined that certain words should be adopted, rather than other words—all future Parliaments are to be bound by that decision. I am not quite sure whether the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate was a Member of the last Parliament. The hon. Member for Argyll was, I am aware; but I do not think that those of us who happened to be in that Parliament entertain such an exaggerated or exalted view of its wisdom, or, at all events, of the wisdom of its Executive, as to cause us to consider that any words it adopted are so obviously and necessarily the right words that discussion of them henceforth becomes impertinent and superfluous. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, whilst appealing to the precedent of 1881, referred only in the most vague manner to the language used in the debate to support the words ultimately introduced into the Act. He did tell us that the question had been considered for a long time; but he did not tell us what were the reasons alleged by the Government of the day for preferring those words that were ultimately adopted to words similar in import to those my hon. and learned Friend beside me proposes to introduce into this Bill, and in not doing so I think he was judicious. All of us who recollect that debate remember perfectly well that though the Government of that day were absolutely determined to stick to their own form of words, they were not very strong in the reasons they adduced, and which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate very judiciously refrained from repeating in the course of the present debate. But leaving the precedent of the Irish Land Act which, after all, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Sleaford (Mr. Chaplin) pointed out, is no precedent in the case of Scotland at all, let us turn for one moment to the merits of the case, and consider what were the arguments of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate in support of the wording of the Bill. He seemed to think that, under the words proposed by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness, some rent would be exacted from the tenants on account of what we used to be familiar with in the late Irish debates as *pretium affectionis.* He seemed to think that there is a land hunger amongst the tenants of the Highlands and Islands, and that they would pay almost anything rather than be turned out of their holdings when one of the circumstances arose that would, if the Amendment were carried, be considered by the landlords, and induce them to fix the rent at a figure which no tenant, having regard for his interests apart from his affection for the land, would be prepared to pay. No one on this side of the House, least of all my hon. and learned Friend near me (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson), has the smallest desire to exact from any tenant in the Highlands or elsewhere money which is not given on account of the value of land, but on account of the tenant's affection for the land on which he was born and the district in which he was brought up. No one wishes that, and we are not of opinion that the words of my hon. and learned Friend, interpreted by any reasonable tribunal, would have any such result. Then, if you but add to the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend the words "to a solvent tenant," though we do not think them necessary, being of opinion that any Law Court in Scotland would assume the hypothetical tenant to be a solvent tenant, we should be perfectly prepared to do it if hon. Gentlemen opposite desire it. After all, what is the ground on which my hon. and learned Friend moves this Amendment? If you leave the Bill in the form in which it has been introduced by Her Majesty's Government, you practically give no direction at all as to the principle on which the rent is to be determined. You leave it absolutely to the discretion of the three gentlemen whom you are going to appoint—and the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has very candidly told us the Government have not the slightest idea who these three gentlemen are to be. Now, you ought not, and you cannot, expect that the Court shall not only interpret the law, but declare the law. If you leave the Bill in its present shape, the Court will not only have to decide how the principles of fixing rent are to be interpreted, but they will also have to determine what those principles are. My hon. and learned Friend, I think, showed in the clearest manner that under the Bill as it at present stands there is no circumstances, however irrelevant to the true value of the holding, which concerns either the landlord or the tenant, which might not by a weak and incompetent or ill-disposed Court be taken into account when they are fixing a fair rent. We think that what the Legislature intends, and what the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate intends, is that the fair and real commercial value should be asked for the holding; and I will ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether he will give us a straight clear answer to the question—Is it, or is it not, intended that the fair rent shall be the fair commercial rent which will be given by a solvent tenant, uninfluenced by the *pretium affectionis* or absurd land hunger? Is that the rent which the Government are prepared to say the Court ought to adjudicate and give to the landlord? Is it that, or is it not? If it is something less than that, then we assert that the Government, under the thin disguise of justice to the tenants, are, in fact, passing a Bill which is intended to rob the landlords. ["Oh, oh!"] I say "if"—if they do something other than that. If, on the other hand, they mean that the rent to be adjudicated by the Land Court is to be a rent which a solvent tenant would give for the land uninfluenced by the *pretium affectionis*, what we ask is that it should be put down in black and white, in clear and unmistakable language, either in the form recommended by my hon. and learned Friend, or in some other form which may appear to the Government more advisable, that that is what they desire, and all they desire, that the Land Court should take into consideration. After all, no human being supposes that the Land Court directed by these words of my hon. and learned Friend would, for one moment, say that the fair rent of a holding was that which some millionaire owner of a deer forest might be prepared to give in order to round off his forest. No one believes that to be possible. If the words of my hon. and learned Friend are open to that construction—which I say they are not—the defect might be remedied by some verbal Amendment. But we should like to have a clear answer from the Government, whether they do or do not think that the fair rent which this Court is to adjudicate is the rent which would be given by a solvent tenant not influenced by *pretium affectionis* if the land was put up to competition? Let them give us a straight answer to that, and we shall know where we are.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I hope Her Majesty's Government will not be entrapped into giving an answer to a question of that kind. If we are to enter into that question, we shall be discussing it for a week, or a fortnight, or a month. We had it all out at the time of the passing of the Irish Land Act. Every possible definition was tried, and it was found impossible to settle the matter in any other way than it was settled at that time. The provision in this Bill is similar to that in the Irish Act; and I hope we shall not waste any further time on this academical discussion.

MR. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): I wish to say a word or two in consequence of what has fallen from the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy. He says that this measure is in principle identical with that of the Irish Land Act.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: What I said was that this particular question is identical in the two cases.

MR. RAMSAY: That this particular question is identical in the two cases. Now, there was nothing more frequently repeated in the course of the discussion on the Irish Land Act than the assurance given by the Prime Minister of that day—that none of the provisions of the Bill then under discussion were applicable to any holding in England or Scotland. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] We are discussing a very important point. Unless the right hon. and learned Gentleman is going to place Scotland—this limited area of Scotland—in the position of Ireland, he should not adhere to these terms. If there be ambiguities in them—and in my opinion there are, and I am accustomed to looking through Acts of Parliament—they should be amended. I think there is ambiguity in the expression, "all the circumstances of the case," especially as it may affect the poverty of an owner or the poverty of an occupier, as the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) has said—I think it may mean either the one or the other—and I say that a prejudice may arise in the minds of the Land Commissioners to favour either the one or the other. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] If hon. Members persist in these interruptions, I shall move to report Progress. I would do that rather than risk not giving a hearing in this Committee to men whose interests are assailed. To tell gentlemen sitting as a Land Court to determine according to "all the circumstances of the case" is to impose upon them a very vague duty, and is an expression which should not be made part of an Act of Parliament. What I would suggest to my right hon. and learned Friend below me (the Lord Advocate), is that the clause should be altered—without, perhaps, including all those matters that were alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Chaplin)—by striking out the words "all the circumstances of the case," and making the circumstances those of the holding and the district in which it is situated. "All the circumstances of the case" renders the whole thing vague. What are all the circumstances of the case? They may be anything that the members of the Land Court may choose to take into consideration. I would leave it thus—

> "May determine what is the fair rent at which the holding may reasonably be expected to let at from year to year, and determine accordingly."

I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate should accept that suggestion, and so improve the clause without affecting the interests of either owners or occupiers. I know there are Gentleman on this side of the House who are desirous of injuring the landlords or landowners in every way they possibly can, and would try to introduce the Irish Land Laws into Scotland. I should deprecate the placing of any portion of my countrymen in such a position as Ireland occupies at the present moment. I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman should give some consideration to the suggestion which has been made for the amendment of the clause.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I had to leave the Committee for a short time, and as I left it seems the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate got upon his legs. I was very much surprised on coming back to find that either he had stated what he had to state extremely briefly, or that some powerful influence behind him had prevented him from saying what he was about to say. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] Hon. Gentlemen cry "Divide!" but I want to hear what the right hon. and learned Gentleman has got to say on this point. Hon. Gentlemen opposite are now, I think, quite alive to the fact that this is a very important question indeed, and one that ought to be considered with some calmness, and also on which we ought to have definite statements from the Front Bench opposite. [The Lord Advocate: Hear, hear!] "Hear, hear!" says my right hon. and learned Friend. Now, if I recollect aright, when my right hon. and learned Friend was up before, and when I did hear what he had got to say, what he told us was that he had great objection to the use of the words "might in its actual state be reasonably expected to let from year to year," because those words might include the case of a proprietor close at hand, or someone else interested in a deer forest, who, for the purpose of settling the marches and getting his forest squared, might be anxious to take a croft. Therefore, he objected to the words of my hon. and learned Friend behind me (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) as not being clearer and better than those he himself had inserted in his clause. I would ask my right hon. and learned Friend if he considers that the words "the circumstances of the case" tend in any way to exclude such a case as he has supposed? I should imagine that if the case is to be taken on the footing of the wishes and intentions of the people and all the surroundings of the croft, the phrase "the circumstances of the case" is a good deal wider than the words of my hon. and learned Friend, because the word "case" refers to the exact moment at which the question of rent is decided; whereas, I take it that any valuator, setting himself to consider at what rate a certain subject might reasonably be expected to let from year to year, would not consider the circumstances of the exact moment only, but would consider the whole surroundings and the circumstances of the district. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman mean to say that if such a case did arise—the case of a proprietor who desires to take in a croft and lands connected with it for the purpose of squaring the marches of a deer forest—any Land Commission that could sit, even though the chief of it was not merely a barrister—[An hon. Member: An advocate]—I beg pardon. No doubt, I should have said "advocate;" but I am speaking in the House of Commons, and my desire is to make myself intelligible to the whole Committee. In a select circle of Scotch Members, I might have used the correct word; but, under the circumstances, as that word would rather suggest a pleader, I adopted the phrase "barrister," as being, speaking generally, better understood by all sections of Members. I say, would not any Land Commission hold that words so vague, so general, so uncertain, as "the circumstances of the case," would be much more likely to include the case I have referred to than the words proposed by the hon. and learned Gentleman beside me? Now, Sir, no doubt the fact that these words have not been used in this Bill which are used in the Scotch Valuation Act has been well and reasonably accounted for by the circumstance that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) and the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, when they set to work to frame this Bill, naturally went to Ireland for their instructions. It was more natural for them to take words in the Irish Act than words in a Scotch Act of Parliament; but I have yet to learn from my right hon. and learned Friend, or from my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General for Scotland, who has not yet spoken in this important debate—a debate which the Lord Advocate has himself declared to be important—what their objection is to the words used in our Scotch Statute. I have yet to learn whether either of them is able to state the historical fact that any assessor, in considering the valuation of a subject at—

> "The rent at which, one year with another, such holding might in its actual state be reasonably expected to let from year to year,"

has ever taken into consideration such a ridiculous circumstance as someone, say, for instance, a noble Duke, wanting to absorb it for the purpose of rounding a deer forest, and being prepared to pay an absurdly high price for it. An assessor dealing with the subject deals with it on the basis of what, as a general question, it would fetch at a fair rent in the district. Assuredly the words in question were intended to express, in the most clear manner, that the assessor is to take into reasonable consideration the sum for which the subject could, in its existing state, be let from year to year. It is clear that, with the exception which is stated in this Bill, and with which we all agree—namely, the improvements which have been made by the tenant—there would be no difficulty, in dealing with crofts, in coming to what is their value from year to year exactly in the same way as the assessor deals with value under the Valuation Act. The Land Commission will have to consider what is the reasonable and fair rent as between the person owning the land and the person taking the land, not something between the crofter and somebody competing with him; and I shall be surprised if either of my hon. and learned Friends opposite would state that any Land Court could read the Act in any other way. There is one other matter I wish to refer to—namely, that which has been raised by the hon. Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane). The hon. Gentleman suggested, as an Amendment, that we should add words excluding from consideration any increased value due to any improvements in the holding which might be executed by the crofter or his predecessor. I would point out that this would make no practical difference in the clause at all. My main reason for rising, however, was to ascertain from the right hon. and learned Gentlemen opposite whether they intend that the words used in the Scotch Valuation Act, to which there is no real objection, should be used in this Bill; and, whether, seeing that the Bill is one which deals with Scotch matters, and which will be considered by Scotch lawyers, it is not better to have words in it with which we are all acquainted?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I should not have risen again to speak on a subject which I have already dealt with, perhaps, at too great length, but for the circumstance that my right hon. and learned Friend went out and did not hear all my remarks.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I did not go out during my right hon. and learned Friend's speech; I rose when he was supposed to speak but did not, and when I came back he had begun.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I still believe that if the Amendment were inserted, there would be the risk to which I have referred. It is one thing to value under a Valuation Act for the purpose of rating, everybody connected with the land whether as proprietor or tenant, being interested in low rating, and, therefore, in low valuing for rating purposes; but it is another thing when we come to the question of fixing fair rent, where all the considerations I have spoken of may make for the rent being fixed too high. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour) asked me a question as to whether a fair rent is anything different from a commercial rent, which a solvent tenant would pay, not allowing anything for *pretium affectionis.* I certainly think that that is not very far from a correct description of a fair rent; but it is not the language of the Amendment, and the dangers which lurk under the Amendment would not lurk in that language. I suppose that by "solvent tenant" is meant one who not only can pay, but who can pay from a business carried on on the spot, not from other resources. What is the difference between that and the fair rent which a man can live and thrive while paying?

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): May I be allowed to say that, in the course of this discussion, I have heard only two valid objections stated to my Amendment? First, the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has said that the great danger and evil in this part of the country is that there is a great congestion of population; that the people cannot live and thrive upon their holdings, and that high rents will be the effect of the competition for holdings. I have the advantage of knowing that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has a large experience in valuation trials, and I ask is it not a settled rule in these proceedings that the Court rejects as evidence of value all leases and agreements which have resulted in insolvency? Accordingly, if in any district the Commission has to ascertain the value of a particular holding, and if it be proposed to hold that a particular rent is the true value, they would at once proceed to ask if that was ever offered or paid, and how the tenant got on, and if they found that the tenant was bankrupt in consequence of that rent they would reject it and turn to another valuation. But is not that the argument which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate ignores? The right hon. and learned Gentleman proposes to put in a clause dealing with arrears, and these arrears have to be dealt with simply because rents are too high and people unable to pay. That is the first thing which the Land Commission, under the Amendment which I propose, would consider, and they would accordingly reject every precedent founded on rent which the tenants were unable to pay. That is one point. The other point is the somewhat fanciful and somewhat strange hypothesis which the right hon. and learned Gentleman resorted to, of some millionaire tenant of a deer forest proposing to buy up all the property in the neighbourhood. But the same process would be applied by any experienced tribunal to this instance. They would look at each croft and see what it would yield from year to year in its natural state, and that means not as part of a deer forest, but as held by a crofter. That is quite sufficient to reject the objection which my right hon. and learned Friend has put. But, apart from that, are cases of that kind so frequent and so continuous that any experienced tribunal would take them into account? On these grounds, I appeal to the good sense of the Committee. My position on the subject is this—I am not anxious to keep up rents, but I want to have them settled on intelligible principles; and I think it is the duty of Parliament, in dealing with what is an entirely novel and experimental method of ascertaining the value of land, to lay down plain and intelligible rules for the guidance of the Land Commission. I say that the clause proposed by the Government furnishes no rule; and that, on the contrary, instead of concentrating the attention of the Court on the property, it diverts its attention to all the circumstances of every human being connected with the case, and every ancillary circumstance which can be called into play, so as to distract attention. I have not heard that defence or excuse of this method being laid down instead of a plain definition which I should have expected from my right hon. and learned Friend. My object is to furnish a rule to the Commission which anyone who reads may understand, and I cannot refrain from asking the Committee to express its opinion upon it. I think it may be considered as an axiom, with regard to all administrative bodies, that no matter how excellent and well-selected such a body may be, its members are but human, and as such you cannot get together any three men one of whom shall not have a bias towards the irrelevant.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 216; Noes 66: Majority 150.—(Div. List, No. 55.)

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I do not wish to revive the discussion which has occupied the last two hours and a-half. I have listened with amazement to the arguments of many learned lawyers opposite in favour of excluding from the consideration of the Judges "the circumstances of the case." This is the first time that I ever heard such an argument as that the circumstances of a case to be left to the discretion of the Judges should be removed from the cognizance of the Judges. The complaint in Ireland is that the Judges of the Land Court have not clearly understood the meaning of the clause in the Irish Act; and the tenants complain that they have been rented on their own improvements. I propose to amend the clause by the insertion of an instruction to the Commission to the effect that in considering the fair rent—

> "They shall particularly exclude any increased value due to any improvements on the holding which may have been executed by the crofter or his predecessor."

I wish expressly to exclude from the consideration of the Court any value of the holding which is due to the action of the tenant—which is due to the expenditure of his labour and capital. I hope that the words I propose will make the matter clear. My object in proposing this Amendment is to avoid a difficulty which has arisen in the operation of the Irish Land Act.

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, line 37, omit the words "taking into consideration," and insert "excluding any increased value."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'taking into consideration' stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am afraid it will not be expedient to accept this Amendment. Reference has been made to the Irish Land Act; and I may point out to my hon. Friend (Mr. Macfarlane) that, under the 9th sub-section of that Act which he proposes to adopt in substance, though not in exact words, a great deal of difficulty has arisen. There the words were—

"For which, in the opinion of the Court, the tenant, or his predecessor in title, has not been paid or otherwise compensated by the landlord or his predecessor."

In short, the two things have been held to create a set-off against each other. There is, first of all, the declaration that you are to exclude the one thing, and then a negative declaration that you are to exclude something else. We had that in view when framing the clause; but, of course, it is for the Committee to say whether they will, by adopting affirmative words simply directing that this shall be considered, without absolutely dictating the conclusion at which the Land Commission shall arrive, avoid the dangers which have arisen under the Irish Land Act.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate is somewhat mistaken. In the case of Adams *v.* Dunseath it was decided that the Court had to take two things into consideration in fixing fair rent; they had to ascertain the unimproved value of the soil, and in addition to that they had to take into consideration the improvements. The Court went upon the theory that the improvements were made by the landlord and tenant in partnership, the tenant bringing to the partnership capital and labour, and the landlord bringing what was described as the latent capacity of the soil for improvement. It was held that, owing to the landlord having contributed the latent capacity of the soil for improvement, he was to get some rent in respect of it, and that rent was to be added to the fair rent. In stating that as the result of the case of Adams *v.* Dunseath, I speak in the presence of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Dublin University (Mr. Holmes), who, I believe, was counsel for one of the parties. In consequence of the Court's decision, the tenant was taxed for the improvements towards which the landlord contributed nothing whatever. I do not argue that that is a reasonable construction for any Court to put upon the words of the Act; but the construction I described was placed upon the words; and I have very little doubt that what happened in the case of Adams *v.* Dunseath would be quoted, if necessary, in the Highlands of Scotland. We know that Courts are inclined to compliment each other on the decisions they arrive at. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) tells us that the same thing could not happen under this clause. We get many legal opinions in this House, and especially from the Treasury Bench, which are not afterwards borne out by the result. I think the Amendment is a necessary one; it will merely carry out in more distinct language what the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has in view.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I would like the Committee to note the great change which has taken place in the judgment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane) as to the merits of the wording of the Irish Land Act since we discussed the last Amendment. The hon. Gentleman, replying to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bute (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson), who had just proposed an Amendment, thought the wording of the Irish Act was so perfect that he was indignant at the very idea of altering it.

Mr. MACFARLANE: What I referred to was, not the wording, but the principle of the Act.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: There was no discussion as to the principle; but the question was whether the principle was carried out by the wording of the Act. I think the hon. Gentleman is bound not to persevere with this Amendment.

MR. MACFARLANE: I will not press the Amendment; it is useless to divide when it is evident the majority of the Committee are against me.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to move that the word "permanent," in line 38, be omitted, and the word "unexhausted" be inserted instead thereof. It is very clear that a very large part of the value of a farm may arise from the high degree of fertility to which it has been raised by a long and scientific application of manures. Under the operation of the clause, as it at present stands, much of the real value due to the tenant will be entirely excluded from consideration. On the other hand, it is very desirable that words should be inserted to protect the landlord against spurious claims; and I think the word "unexhausted"—would serve that purpose.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 38, omit the word "permanent," and insert "unexhausted,"—(*Mr. Hunter,*) instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the word 'permanent' stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): I must say I think this would be an improvement of the clause. The question which arises under this clause is not that of paying compensation, but that of ascertaining rent; and therefore it does seem to me that there might be improvements which, although not of that permanent character which would demand or require money compensation for the outgoing tenant, might yet be sufficient to take into account in determining what was a just rent to be paid by the sitting tenant.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I have no objection to raise to the principle contained in this proposal; but it appears to me that, if it is to be adopted by the Committee, it would be necessary that there should be another Schedule stating what are unexhausted improvements. [The LORD ADVOCATE dissented.] The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) shakes his head; but, unless there is a Schedule, who is to decide what are unexhausted improvements? [The LORD ADVOCATE: The Land Commission.] That is all very well; but I remember that in all previous legislation of this nature the improvements for which compensation is to be paid have been Scheduled. They may have been divided into different classes; they may have been called permanent improvements or temporary improvements; but I think it would be going a great deal too far to lay down in this Bill that compensation should be given for unexhausted improvements without the slightest indication in the Bill as to what unexhausted improvements are to consist of. Unless I receive some assurance from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate that this point will be carefully considered by the Government, I cannot say I should be so ready to accept the Amendment.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: This Amendment is not on the Paper. I think it is an improvement; but I shall be very glad to consider before the time of Report whether any Schedule is needed or not. I must say, however, that the impression on my mind at the present moment is that a Schedule will not be needed. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin) will recollect that in 1883 the great reason for classifying improvements under three heads was, that for one class of improvements consent was required; for a second class, notice without consent; and for a third class, neither consent nor notice. We have no case of that kind here, and therefore the reason does not now exist for classifying the improvements which existed at that time.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I confess I do not quite like the change, so far as the four corners of this Bill are concerned. It seems to me that the very nature of permanent improvements is that they are unexhausted. Besides, these tenants have also the benefit of the Agricultural Holdings Act. I am willing to accept the Amendment, on the understanding that the tenants will still be entitled to consideration for certain improvements not permanent under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I would suggest that, instead of striking out the word "permanent," my hon. Friend should add the words "or unexhausted."

MR. HUNTER: Yes; I will ask leave to withdraw the Amendment, and in lieu thereof add the words "or unexhausted" after "permanent."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Perhaps the whole matter had better stand over till Report, and for this reason—if we are not to have a Schedule, and on that point the Government do not appear to have made up their minds, I do not think we ought to have these words at all. We had better leave the Bill as it is, and let the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate consider the matter.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: Of course, if I did reconsider the matter, it would be on the understanding that the evident sense of the Committee seemed to be that, in some shape or form, these words should be inserted. Suppose a man put manure in the land which would last for three years. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hunter) would see fit to strike out both adjectives, and leave only "improvements." In the Irish Land Act, to which reference has been so often made, only the word "improvements" is used.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I move now to insert, after the word "permanent," the words "or unexhausted."

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 38, after the word "permanent," insert the words "or unexhausted."—(*Mr. Hunter.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I only wish to have a clear and distinct understanding on this point, so that there may be no mistake when the question is raised hereafter. What we contend is this—that of all improvements by which the fixing of the rent is to be guided there must be a definition in the Bill. The definition of improvements, whether they are permanent improvements or whether they are unexhausted improvements, ought not, in our opinion, to be left entirely to the Land Commissioners. The principle for which we contend has been recognized already in the Bill, because there is a Schedule stating distinctly what permanent improvements are to consist of. There is no reason that I am able to see for making any distinction with regard to unexhausted improvements; indeed, I believe that to make such a distinction would be a clear departure from recognized legislation on this subject. I hope the Government will undertake to add to the Bill a definition of unexhausted improvements, either in the shape of a new Schedule or in some other form.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I hardly like at the moment to give a positive promise that we will put in another Schedule. I think the entire Committee will be agreed as to this—that any improvements must have a residue of advantage in them. Whether it would be quite safe to put in a Schedule without rather fuller information as to all possible improvements, I can hardly say; but I will undertake to consider the matter, and confer with those who have knowledge of it. [MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Nothing is to be done now?] I think the words "or unexhausted" might be inserted. The word "permanent" covers improvements such as buildings; and "unexhausted" those which, though they may not have the quality of permanency, are still not worked out or exhausted, such as manuring and liming. Drains will come under the category of unexhausted improvements, for they will sometimes last five, 10, 25, or 30 years.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I think the remarks of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) really demonstrated the necessity of there being some Schedule of unexhausted improvements, because he enumerated things which he thinks come under "unexhausted" improvements, but which are already in the Schedule as "permanent" improvements.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): It seems to me that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has stated the case perfectly intelligibly. There is no Court in the world who would take into consideration improvements of which no residue remained.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Hon. Members opposite object to the word "unexhausted"—["No, no!"]—and the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplain) wants a Schedule of the improvements. What is the meaning of all this? It must be that the landlord shall get the benefit of some improvements effected by tenants which are not in the Schedule. The Schedules in the Agricultural Holdings Act were put in for the express purpose of making the Act of no effect. The broad principle, that the tenant is to be compensated for his improvements according to the value of them to his successor, is laid down in the 1st clause of the Agricultural Holdings Act; but then a Schedule was appended to the Bill, specifying the improvements for which the tenant was to be compensated. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplain) wants a Schedule of unexhausted improvements to this Bill, so that if a tenant makes improvements which do not happen to be in the 1st Schedule they can be confiscated by the landlord.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): May I suggest to the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) that both sides might be satisfied if the word "permanent" were omitted, and the words "then existing" inserted?

MR. HUNTER: When we come to the Definition Clause, could not the difficulty be met by introducing some words which would make "unexhausted" clear?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): This Amendment is not on the Paper, and therefore we have not had an opportunity of considering it. There really is a danger lurking behind these words, unless they are properly guarded. The tenant seeks for a valued rent of his holding, having put in manures which have an unexhausted value of five years. The lease lasts 15 years. The rent for the 15 years is to be determined, and if the Amendment is passed, partially upon the unexhausted value of the five years of manures. At the end of the term, the man comes for a reconsideration of his lease. He has not kept up his land to the same heart, I may say; but the grounds of the decision at the beginning of the first 15 years are not before the Court at the beginning of the second 15 years, and they will take into consideration the rent fixed at the beginning of the first term by the previous Court, without knowing that part of that rent was determined by improvements which have since become exhausted. I only put this point of difficulty before the Committee as one which deserves consideration, and I earnestly recommend them not to adopt at this moment any words at all, but simply assent to the broad principle—that no tenant is to be charged for the value of improvements, permanent or transitory, any part of the value of which is not exhausted. I ask the Government to consider the question in all its bearings, and bring up an Amendment on Report.

MR. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead): I beg to support the appeal to the Government to consider this question between this and Report, and not adopt the words brought up on the spur of the moment. The clause contemplates permanent improvements that spread over a long period of years, and date back for a long time, which is hardly applicable to what we now contemplate by unexhausted improvements. I think it is the general opinion that the word "permanent" should stand, and that some special words should be found to cover unexhausted improvements. The words proposed are not at all applicable to the clause, and their insertion would lead to confusion. The whole matter requires a good deal of consideration.

MR. GOSCHEN (Edinburgh, E.): It appears to me that the Committee is so nearly agreed upon the principle of this Amendment that it would be a great pity if we went to a division. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) says he will accept the words proposed — namely, "or unexhausted." Hon. Members opposite consider that there ought to be a Schedule; and my hon. Friend (Mr. Hunter) admits that the difficulty ought to be met in the Definition Clause. If, then, the Committee are so nearly agreed, these words might be accepted. There would be plenty of time before we came to the end of the Bill for hon. Members either to bring up a Schedule which would embody their views, or a Definition Clause which would make the matter clear. I do not think hon. Members opposite would lose by the insertion of these words, to the principle of which I understand they do not dissent.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I think there need be no hesitation in accepting these words, if there be a distinct understanding that we shall have a Definition Clause, or a Schedule, which will bring up the matter for full consideration.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): The difference between a Schedule and a definition is absolutely immaterial. The only definition we have got of permanent improvements is — "Permanent improvements means the improvements specified in the Schedule to this Act."

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): As an Amendment, I beg to move the insertion of the words "be proved to," after the word "may," in line 38. A careful reading of the clause shows that the words are important. When it is considered that these improvements may go back for a period which is not yet fixed, it is clear there should be some evidence that the improvements have been executed by the crofter or his predecessors in the same family; or it would do as well to leave out the word "may," and let the clause read "which have been executed."

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 38, after the word "may," insert the words "be proved to."—(*Mr. Kimber.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I think that these words are not only unnecessary, but might be mischievous. They are unnecessary, because the Land Commission will not take any cognizance of what is not established to their satisfaction; and they might be mischievous, because, if in one particular case, the words "be proved to" are inserted, it might lead to the idea, in some uninstructed minds, that things that are not proved are to be taken into account in other cases.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I think the statement of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate might satisfy my hon. Friend (Mr. Kimber). At the same time, my hon. Friend's interposition has been useful. The distinct statement of the right hon. and learned Gentleman will be some guide to the Land Commission.

The LORD ADVOCATE: If the word "may" is supposed to create a difficulty, we might put in a word not of possibility, but of certainty. I will move to leave out "may" and insert "shall."

Question, "That the word 'shall' be there inserted,"—(*The Lord Advocate,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment (*Mr. Kimber*), by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 38, leave out "may."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question, "That the word 'may' stand part of the Clause" put, and *negatived.*

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I have a small Amendment to move, which I think the Government will be able to accept. I desire to insert the words "or paid for," after "executed." The words are used in Clause 8. I think it is necessary the reading of the two clauses should correspond.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 39, after "executed," insert "or paid for."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): If my hon. Friend (Sir George Campbell) only means something the crofter has paid somebody else for doing work for him, that would be the same as something executed by him. If, on the other hand, he means by the use of the words "or paid for" to bring in again our old friend "free sale," I certainly shall oppose the Amendment, on the ground that it will have a dangerous result.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I mean to do nothing of the kind. I merely wish to use the words in the same sense as they are used in Clause 8.

The LORD ADVOCATE: If there is anything wrong with the 8th clause, we will gladly amend it when we come to it.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 95; Noes 229: Majority 134.—(Div. List, No. 56.)

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name—that is, in page 3, line 39, after "executed," insert "within

30 years previous to the date of the application." I think the Members of the Committee will agree with me that it will be very undesirable to leave this Clause 6 in any way indefinite. On turning to the other clauses of the Bill, I find that in Clause 8 the Government have, in drawing this Bill, fixed 30 years as the period which was laid down for compensation for improvements in the case of a crofter leaving his tenancy. I have taken, therefore, the same term of years as the period during which the Land Commission should take into account permanent improvements in fixing the fair rent. I do not wish to trouble the Committee; but I think that as the Government themselves have fixed 30 years in the Compensation Clause, that period ought to be adopted in this clause.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I would point out to the Committee that the question here is not quite the same. The object in this case is not to bring out the precise money sum, or the precise money value which shall form a claim against the landlord, but merely to determine what is the fair rent payable. I submit that if the improvement is there, it would be a mistake to say that the residue shall not be taken into account, merely because it was made over 30 years before.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): But in the Clause the rent is to be determined upon purely monetary considerations; and, therefore, if the Government are right in fixing 30 years as the period within which compensation can be claimed for improvements, I do not quite catch the force of the argument of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, when he says that we are to go beyond 30 years in fixing the rent. I have grave doubts, moreover, whether improvements effected more than 30 years ago are worth taking into account.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I think it is desirable that we should limit the cost of the inquiry by the Commission as much as possible; and, therefore, it will certainly be advisable to fix the time beyond which their investigation shall not go with regard to improvements.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): The Amendment which stands in my name deals with a question which exists all through the Bill, and that is the hereditary principle. I wish, in lines 39 and 40, in page 3, to move to leave out the words "with the same family," after the word "predecessor;" and I should have thought that the result of the Motion which we had the other night in regard to hereditary legislation ought to have kept this principle out of the Bill. I would like to ask the Committee, is an improvement any less an improvement because it is not executed by the relative of the tenant? Can any Member of the Committee give me an answer to that? I say no. I say it is no less an improvement, whether it is made by a relative or any other person, and I think the tenant is entitled to be paid for it, seeing that he has presumedly to pay for it when he entered. This is a principle which goes right through the Bill; but I hope the phrase will not be insisted upon, but will be dropped from the measure altogether.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I shall not go into any lengthened explanation of this matter in stating our reason for inserting these words, as I have already explained the views of the Government in a previous debate, when the sense of the Committee was taken upon it. I then pointed out that, according to Scotch law, there can be no such thing as a predecessor by the way of assignment in a yearly holding. We acknowledge only hereditary right through descent, and this necessarily shuts out the legal possibility of any transmission of any claim from anyone else, because the holding must have been back in the landlord's hands, and come again from him by a fresh arrangement with the new tenant. I cannot see, therefore, on what principle, if a holding has been back in the landlord's hands, and an arrangement has then been made with a new tenant, there should be compensation, the title to which has not been derived by kindred.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): In the Report of the Royal Commission, the Commissioners pointed out that a great amount of discontent in the Highlands was owing to the way in which customary rights were ignored. Now, as a matter of fact, the sale of improvements by the old tenant to the new is a customary right which, whether the law allows it or not, exists. If there are districts where this custom exists, I cannot see why the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate objects to the Court being empowered to take such charges into account as a matter of equity, if not of law.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I do not want to go over the same ground again, as we have already discussed this matter. But whenever the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate is at a loss for an argument, he falls back on old Scotch law. The right hon. and learned Gentleman always brings forward this argument—that the crofters have never had this right of assignment in Scotland before, and therefore they shall not have it now. But by the Bill he is giving them fair rent and fixity of tenure. Did they have that before? I think not, or we should not have had the land agitation which has been going on in Scotland for the last five years. But the right hon. and learned Gentleman says that if you grant this, you grant the right of assignment, and he will not grant that concession to others besides members of the same family, because it would make the action of this Bill continuous. Now, that is not the intention of the Bill. The intention of the clause, as it stands, is to extinguish these people for want of heirs. That is the real object of this restriction. The right hon. and learned Gentleman knows perfectly well, and the whole matter lies in this, that, as the Bill now stands, it will confer certain imaginary benefits on the existing crofters of Scotland; but those who have no heirs—whose heirs may be amongst those lying under the battle-fields of the Soudan—although the law recognizes their right to transfer to their heirs, would not be able to sell. The result will be that every crofter who has not a direct heir will forfeit the right of the holding at his death; and, more than that, every crofter who desires to quit his holding, who takes his compensation and goes, leaves his croft to lapse, and perhaps to be added to Mr. Winan's deer forest. The real truth of this matter is that, without some arrangement for the succession of others as well as those in the same family, this Bill will be worthless, and within a few years the people for whom we are contending now will be exterminated in the Highlands of Scotland.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I hope the hon. Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch) will not divide the Committee on this question, as we have already divided on it on a previous occasion. There has been no custom of the sale of tenures; but in many of the Northern counties it is a distinct practice that the improvements, which are called ameliorations, are bought by the incoming tenant from the outgoing tenant, with the full consent of the landlord.

DR. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): This Amendment will appear to be perfectly reasonable to anyone who has read the Report of the Royal Commission to the Highlands. I never heard of a landlord paying for any improvements on his land; but as soon as the crofter goes, his improvements are confiscated.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): It seems to me that it is an exceedingly painful thing that we should be fighting like this on so simple a matter—that we should have all these arguments on the question of whether the crofter should or should not have the right of assignment.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 224; Noes 107; Majority 117.—(Div. List, No. 57.)

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to move, as an Amendment, in page 3, line 40, after "family," to insert "not previously paid for or otherwise allowed for by the landlord or his predecessors." This Amendment will, I think, commend itself by its reasonableness without a long speech from me. I am sure the Government and the Committee have no intention of acting unfairly to the landlord, and that they desire to act fairly between him and the tenant. On looking through the Bill, I found it patent that, in the matter of compensation, the landlord might already have paid for the improvements made by the tenant in previous years. I found that in fixing the rent there was no provision made for this contingency; therefore I put my Amendment down to make such provision. It seems quite clear that directly this Bill becomes law, though the landlord and tenant may, under private agreement, have come to some arrangement as to previous improvements, yet, under the clause as it now stands, in future transactions that arrangement may not be taken into account. Further than that, if you look at the end of the Bill at Clause 19, you will see the powers conferred on the Commissioners to be appointed under the Bill may be "transferred to another body created under Act of Parliament," so that when the Commissioners may have fixed the judicial rent and taken an account of the improvements then made by the tenant and paid for by the landlord, this future Body, when the judicial term of 15 years may have expired, may come on the tapis and deal with these same improvements that the Land Commissioners have already provided for. These two contingencies do not seem to be adequately met by the clause, and on that account I wish to insert the words "not previously paid for or otherwise allowed for by the landlord or his predecessors."

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 40, after "family," insert "not previously paid for or otherwise allowed for by the landlord or his predecessors."—(*Mr. W. F. Lawrence.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): If the terms of this Bill were the same as those of the Irish Act, declaring that certain improvements were to be excluded, it might have been necessary to accept this Amendment. But, as I stated to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane), all we say in this clause as to improvements is that they shall be taken into consideration. It seems quite obvious that the result of that consideration could never be to allow anything for which compensation has already been given in one form or another. All we say is—"We direct your attention to these improvements;" and the result of that will only be that the Commissioners shall take into account what has not been satisfied in any other shape or form.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): It seems the only objection to this Amendment is that the words are not necessary. It is conceded that they could not do any harm. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate admits that they carry out the intention of the Bill; and I therefore submit that if there is any possibility of doubting the wording of the clause, or if they can make its meaning clearer, it is desirable to insert the words. Clearly, they carry out the views of the right hon. and learned Gentleman.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I apprehend that these words would not be necessary if the tribunal that has to decide on the fair rent is a legal tribunal. If it is to be a lay tribunal they would be necessary. If the hon. Member (Mr. W. F. Lawrence) will withdraw the Amendment until we have discussed the tribunal, he may find that the tribunal will be a strong one, and may, consequently, feel it unnecessary to move. If, however, the tribunal is not a strong one, it might be well to put these words in, in order to have the meaning of the Bill beyond all question.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE: I will follow the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to move, as an Amendment, the insertion in page 3, line 43, of the following words, after the word "family"—

> "Less by the valued amount of any dilapidation of the holding caused by the crofter or his said predecessors, and also taking into consideration any improvement or contribution of the landlord or his predecessors."

I have no doubt I shall find amongst the supporters of this Amendment the hon. Gentleman the Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane). The hon. Member holds, to my mind without foundation or accuracy, that speakers on this side desire that the Land Commission who will have to carry out this measure shall have excluded from their consideration certain circumstances which it may be necessary to bear in mind in the interest of the tenant. No such suggestion was made from this side. The effect of the words I now propose would be to bring essential considerations before the Land Commission; and no doubt the hon. Member, if he is *bonâ fide* in his argument, will find it to his interest to support my Amendment. The reasons why the Land Commission should take these things into their consideration are these:

Apart from the principle that I have before alluded to, that the particularization of a certain matter to be considered by the tribunal excludes or implies the exclusion from their consideration of other matters than those that are particularized, it is only just in this case that we should not only not be silent on the subject of what is to be taken on the other side of the account, but that we should especially name the things that are to be taken in abatement of those matters that are to be allowed to be taken to the credit of the tenant. Now, it is obvious, as was said on a former Amendment, that one part of a croft may be improved, whilst another part may be injured—one building on a croft may be improved, whilst another is allowed to fall into dilapidation. I think the sense of justice of hon. Members all round the House will admit that if a tenant is to have credit for the value of his improvements, he should also have that value debited with any dilapidations which he may have allowed to take place during his tenancy. The second part of my Amendment calls on the Land Commission to take into consideration, that is to say to have regard to, the fact that some of the improvements which may appear physically to exist on the croft, or any contribution which may have been made in times past by the landlord towards improvements which are visible to the eye, but which do not speak for themselves as being the work of the landlord, are really the work of the landlord. The Amendment will require the Commissioners to consider whether or not the improvements which appear to the eye to be then existing on the croft were created wholly or partially by the assistance—either in money or in kind—of the landlord; and I appeal, as I did before, to another part of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's Bill in recognition of this principle. I probably did not enforce attention to it as much as I ought to have done, or did not state the case with sufficient clearness on the other Amendment; but if you will refer to Clause 10 you will find that when the Land Commission are assessing the amount of compensation which a tenant is to receive on removal, for his improvements, they are directed thus—

> "In fixing the amount of compensation payable, the value of any assistance or consideration which may be proved to have been given by the landlord or his predecessors in title in respect of such improvements shall be taken into account, and deducted from such compensation."

I am only, therefore, proposing to carry into effect, in the ascertainment of the annual value, the same principle of valuation of improvements which is recognized as regards the statutable payment at the end of the tenant's holding. I appeal to the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, when speaking upon this, to explain to the Committee, for our information, why it is that a different valuation of improvements is adopted in one case from that which is adopted in the other? If it is fair to deduct from the amount the tenant is to be paid at the end of the tenancy any contribution on the part of the landlord, surely it is fair that in ascertaining the rent that the tenant is to pay when he is going to continue tenant the annual value of the landlord's improvements, or of his contribution to improvements, should be taken into account. My proposal as to dilapidations is one the justice of which I hope goes without saying. I appeal to the common sense and sense of fairness of hon. Members whether, if they applied it to their own case, and they had a house and a warehouse let to the same tenant, and the tenant, for reasons that appeared good to him, kept the house in repair, and perhaps added a billiard room, but let the warehouse fall into disrepair and decay—I appeal to them, would it be fair that he should be allowed the full value of the improvements he had effected in the house, without having deducted the value of the dilapidations which had taken place in respect of the warehouse? What we want is simply fair play from this tribunal; and I do submit that on the principle laid down by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Argyll, whose sympathies are very large, that if it is fair not to exclude from the consideration of the Commissioners circumstances in favour of the tenant, it is equally not fair to exclude from their consideration circumstances that go to the other side of the account.

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, line 40, after the word "family," insert the words "less by the valued amount of any dilapidation of the holding caused by the crofter or his said predecessors, and also taking into consideration any improvement or contribution of the landlord or his predecessors."—(*Mr. Kimber.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I will say the same of this, that I did of the last Amendment. It might be appropriate, if you were stating a sort of debtor and creditor account, with a view to bringing out a money balance; but what is to be recollected here is this — The holding is found in an existing condition, *primâ facie* the property of the landlord, and *primâ facie* the rent would be on the holding as it stands. But that may or may not be the case. It may be that there is something there that belongs to the tenant, and what belongs to the tenant are his improvements. It is necessary to provide that the improvements of the tenant shall not be used as an instrument for raising the rent against himself. The improvements of the landlord will be taken into consideration without question, because they are part of the holding as it stands. Therefore, if the general scheme of the Bill is approved, without binding the Commissioners down to exclude certain things, as was done in the case of the Irish Act, their attention will simply be pointed to what belongs to the tenant, so that all the rest will seem entirely superfluous. The *primâ facie* case is that the property is the landlord's, and its full value will be taken into account.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): The objection of my hon. Friend is one which I am bound to say has a great deal of force in it. The framing of the clause does not confine the attention of the arbiters to the "circumstances of the case," but destroys the perspective of the view by projecting forward the improvements made by the tenants. There is a complete parity of reason between the consideration of the two interests, and if the one is brought forward it seems only reasonable that the other should also be put forward. It ought to be admitted, and I think my right hon. and learned Friend is bound to admit, that the clause is not symmetrical as it stands. I hope the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will, at all events, confirm the view taken by hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House, that the Commissioners ought to take into consideration the improvements of the landlord.

Question put, and *negatived.*

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): The object of the Amendment I have to propose is to—

> "Provide that the Land Commission, in fixing the fair rent, shall not have regard to any profession, trade, or occupation carried on by the tenant on or in connection with the holding."

If we may judge from past experience, we may expect that the landlord will increase the rent in consequence of improvements made at the public expense. Now, I wish to prevent that, and in order to do so I think that this Proviso should be admitted. We say that the Land Commission ought not to take into account the business or occupation carried on in connection with a building, especially the occupation of fishing.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 3, line 41, after "accordingly," insert—"Providing that the Land Commission, in fixing a fair rent, shall not have regard to any profession, trade, or occupation carried on by the tenant on or in connection with the holding."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am afraid that if we were to introduce this Proviso it would render the valuation of a large number of holdings almost impossible. It has been explained more than once—and it has been made an objection from certain quarters—that the Bill is proposed to apply to any holdings, however small—not limited to £4, £6, or any other amount of rent; and that it extends to a very large number of small tenants who could not live by the mere cultivation of the holding on which the house may be situated, but who still find it a very convenient and advantageous thing to have a holding whence they can go forth to their various occupations. Now, if the proposal of my hon. Friend were accepted it would come to this—that holdings which were so small that a man could not live by them would have no value at all; but they might have a value to a man to come and live there, and have his home there. I do not know any kind of property with reference to which you are debarred from considering, in valuing the property, the convenience of a man carrying on business there. It is just those things which gives value to property. Suppose there is a house in one part of a particular area 10 miles inland, and another in another part close by the sea where there is a good harbour for the convenience of boats and access to a market town; would it be at all right to say that the fishing industry for which the latter part of the area is adopted should not be taken into account? You would render valuation impossible by the adoption of that principle; and, therefore, I submit that it would be misleading, and almost absurd, to introduce an Amendment which would debar you from taking into account a very material element in the valuation which you have to consider.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY: But a barrister might be making £10,000 in his chambers; and, so far as the argument of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate is concerned, I think the barrister would complain very justly of the valuers taking that into consideration in fixing the rent of the premises. A man may carry on a profitable fishing business in connection with the house, or a very unprofitable one. I maintain that the value of a house for rent depends upon the cost of its erection, and not upon whether it is occupied by a fisherman, or by a person engaged in cultivating the land. If I had any doubt as to the Amendment before, after the statement of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate I am convinced that it is absolutely necessary that a Proviso should be added to the clause, that the Land Commission should not take into consideration the profession, trade, or occupation carried on in connection with the holding.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I do not quite agree with the theory laid down by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, because it seems to me that the principle of the Bill is that the valuation should be for the agricultural and pastoral use of the land, not for its suitability for residential purposes, or the carrying on of trade. In the case of a person living near the sea shore, and having two or three acres of land, it would seem that the right hon. and learned Gentleman means that the rent should be charged on what the fisherman draws out of the water, and not on what he draws from the land. If that is the view of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate I am quite sure it is not the intention of the Act. The case might be that of a fisherman holding land yielding not more than 10*s.* a-year, but who draws the worth of £100 out of the sea. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman mean that the valuation should be on the latter? We ought to have some explanation of his meaning on that point, because there is absolutely no limit to the charge which the Land Commissioners might make on the produce of the fisherman's nets.

MR. M'LAREN (Stafford): Could not the Government devise some words, and bring them up on Repot, which would carry out the views expressed, that the crofter should not be charged extra rent in respect of any business which he might carry on apart from land cultivation? I believe that would have the effect of preventing misunderstanding; and it is, in my opinion, worthy of the attention of the Government.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The real question is, as to whether or not the landlord should have any advantage from the position of his property? It has never been denied to the owner of the soil that he should get the benefit of such position. The hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) said that every house should be rented according to the cost of erection. Now, I have built a great many houses, and I will only ask the hon. Member if he is prepared to reduce the rent of every house which has been determined on the basis of its being near a railway station, near the centre of a town, or near the sea? I think the hon. Member will perceive, on consideration, that if anyone has a right to benefit by the position of a house it is undoubtedly the landlord, and not the tenant.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick): The question is, who increases the value of the property? I think it is the man who starts a business on it; and it is he, in my opinion, who should have the benefit of the business created, and not the landlord.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): It has nothing to do with the question whether a man is successful or not in business. The question is—what is the value of the house to let in the place where it is situated?—and it would be grossly unfair if houses in the best position should be rented the same as those which are not in so good a position.

When a person takes a house he considers, in the first instance, whether the house would suit him—he considers the amount of accommodation, the arrangements, and other points. But he likewise considers the suitability of the house for the business he intends to carry on there. Of course, it is not the position of the house alone; it is the accommodation necessary to carry on business there that the fisherman considers; and if that accommodation is due to the circumstances of the place, surely that is a matter to be taken into consideration by the Commissioners in fixing the fair rent. It seems to me almost an outrageous proposition for any hon. Members to put forward that two cottages built in the same way, and fitted up in the same way, but in different parts of the country, should always be rented at the same rate. Then the hon. Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane) says it ought not to be a question how much a man is to be charged for what he gets out of fishing. But that is not so; he may make nothing at all; but the question is whether the value of the house to him is exactly the same before as after the business was started. The fair rent is fixed according to the locality as well as the value of the house itself, and having regard to other matters.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): The Commissioners only found four districts in which they considered that the people were very much rack-rented, and one of those was in the county which I represent. The cause of the rack-renting is that the tenants are paying a rent for fishing, besides the agricultural rent. At first there were small harbours which the people could use, and the houses were all built by them; that is the rule in all cases in the Western Islands. But, unfortunately, those harbours are broken up, and yet the people are still paying £2 or £2 10*s*. a-year for land near the sea coast; whereas better land, higher up, does not carry that rent. The rent of that land is 25*s*. per acre, because it does not include fishing rent. In the Island of Arran the crofters make their rent from lodgers during the summer season who come from Paisley, Glasgow, Greenock, and other places. The occupiers leave their habitations, and live in out-houses and other places. On the first reading of the Bill I called attention to the case of a person who built a house himself, and who, having got a 15 years' lease, had his rent increased from £18 to a very large sum, because he had made additions to it for the accommodation of Glasgow merchants. We want to prevent that in future, both with regard to persons who let their houses during the summer to lodgers, and those who are engaged in fishing. We are going to give some £25,000 or £50,000, I believe, for the construction of harbours on the coasts of Scotland; and, unless this Amendment is agreed to, we believe that the benefit of that money will go to the landlords, instead of the tenants, as fishing rents.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): This Bill relates to crofters and agricultural holdings; and it is not, I think, desirable to allow landlords to take double rent; first, for the agricultural use of the holding; and, secondly, for fishing, or any other occupation which the crofters may be carrying on in addition to their agricultural business. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour) says that the landlord should have the benefit of any houses built upon their land. They may have done so in times past; but it will not be the case in future. We maintain that people who spend money, or labour in improvements, should have the benefit of their own property until they are paid for it. And when we are dealing with agricultural holdings, it seems to me that there can be no harm in agreeing to an Amendment which is intended to prevent crofts having a double rent raised upon them.

Mr. J. E. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I have had some experience in these cases, and I represent a constituency which is nearest to that part of Scotland in which the crofters are chiefly situated. I am aware of instances which have occurred of the kind mentioned. I am acquainted with the case of two holdings, of the same extent and value, and held by two brothers. The one brother improved his holding, and added to the house the business of a grocer; he did a considerable trade, and was charged three times the amount of rent paid by his brother, the crofter, who lives opposite to him, and pays only on the agricultural value of the croft. I can perfectly well conceive that cases similar to that should occur in the places we are now dealing with. I understand that it is to meet such cases that this Amendment is proposed, and I think it only just to support it.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I congratulate the right hon. and learned ex-Lord Advocate on the look of injured innocence and holy horror with which he regarded this Amendment. He seems to think that the landlord has done very much for the country by rescuing it from the barbarism of the Middle Ages. But it appears that the landlords still claim all the birds of the air, and all the fishes of the sea. I wish to point out that the principle against which the right hon. and learned Gentleman contends is already provided for in the section; because it is specifically provided that the Land Commission should consider the circumstances of the case, holding, and district. Practically, in the case of a croft situated near the sea, the Commission would be entitled to consider that fact, and the value in consequence; but the effect of the Amendment would be that while they did that they would not be entitled to consider that the tenant was a fisherman, earning money by fishing. The objection seems to me to be that not only does the landlord want to derive rent from the fact that the croft is near the sea, but also from the fact that the tenant is a fisherman.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I will put a case which will illustrate the position. Two crofters occupy two holdings near the sea, with a harbour within reach; the two crofts are the same in respect of quality of land and characteristics; but one of the crofters has a fishing boat, and the other has not. Now, as to the crofter possessing the fishing boat, would the Commission be entitled to charge him more rent? ["No, no!"] I am glad to hear the right hon. and learned Gentleman say "No;" because it is amusing to listen to hon. Gentlemen urging now that the Commission should take into consideration the circumstances of the case to which they had so much objection an hour ago. The right hon. and learned Gentleman says that the rent would not be charged specifically on the boats. Of course, it is not fair to assess boats for rent; but you are going to take into account the fact that the crofter lives near the sea, and his power of catching fish. I should like to have some assurance that there is no such intention.

Mr. J. WILSON (Edinburgh, Central): I think it unnecessary to go on limiting the powers of the Land Commission in this matter; but I hope I may be allowed to beg the Committee to make some progress with the Bill, if there is any intention that it should be passed this Session. We have not yet got through more than three pages of Amendments out of 23, and we are only on Clause 6. Let us come to a decision upon this question as soon as possible; and I trust that hon. Gentlemen will be as brief as they can in their remarks, so that some progress may be made.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): The remarks of hon. Gentlemen opposite are conclusive in favour of this Amendment, inasmuch as they have laid down the principle that a landlord is entitled to rent for the sea as well as for the land. That is what I object to; and, as a matter of fact, all round the coast of Caithness, landlords are exacting rents altogether disproportionate to the land, and which would not be paid, were it not that the land is near the sea. I am anxious to make progress with the Bill; but I am bound to say that the responsibility for the delay which may take place lies with Her Majesty's Government. I am one of those who think the Bill almost worthless; and, unless we succeed in amending it, it is of very little consequence whether it passes or not. We feel that, unless we draw attention to the illusory character of the provisions of the measure, we should be incurring the grave responsibility of being parties to a Bill which will not carry out what it professes to do.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 111; Noes 195: Majority 84.—(Div. List, No. 58.)

Mr. T. BLAKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to move, Sir, that you report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. T. Blake.*)

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I wish to make an appeal to the Committee to go on a little longer, in order that we may make some further progress with the Bill.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I think that there are one or two Amendments which might very well be taken to-night if the hon. Member opposite (Mr. T. Blake) will withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cranborne): I would remind the Committee that there is another Bill coming on—the Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill—in which a great many Members take an interest; and I trust, therefore, that Progress will be reported very shortly.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I beg, Sir, to move the following Amendment:—

In page 3, line 41, at the end of sub-section (1), insert—"Provided that when not fewer than twenty tenants, holding of the same landlord within the same parish, shall conjointly petition the Land Commission to fix a fair rent, the Land Commission shall after due notice visit the locality, and after hearing parties may, if they see fit, make a general order to reduce by an uniform percentage the rents of the whole of the petitioners, or of such of their number as shall be specified in such order."

By this machinery a good deal of difficulty which may arise will be got over, and, in the event of the landlord and tenant not being able to agree, the Land Commission could be called in to decide what the fair rent ought to be. The provisions of the Bill are somewhat cumbersome, and the object of the Amendment is to enable the Commissioners to get through their work quickly, which will be to the advantage both of the landlords and of the tenants. In the West Highlands rents have frequently been increased all over estates by certain percentages, and the Amendment only enables that process to be reversed. I make the proposition because I think it will induce agreements to be made between landlord and tenant.

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, line 41, at the end of sub-section (1), insert—"Provided that when not fewer than twenty tenants, holding of the same landlord within the same parish, shall conjointly petition the Land Commission to fix a fair rent, the Land Commission shall after due notice visit the locality, and after hearing parties may, if they see fit, make a general order to reduce by an uniform percentage the rents of the whole of the petitioners, or of such of their number as shall be specified in such order."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I really do not think that this Amendment is necessary for the purpose of enabling the Commission to make an order in such a form as the hon. Member desires. Further, I hardly think it is quite consistent with what we have already done. It might be said that, although we first of all told the Commissioners to have regard to the special circumstances of each case, we next told them to dispose of the cases *en bloc.*

Question put, and *negatived.*

DR. CLARK (Caithness): The Amendment which I propose to move is practically a new clause, and it is a very important one. It is this—

In page 3, at end of sub-section (1), insert—"The Court shall schedule with their order a table of the average price of grain, potatoes, beef, mutton, dairy produce, and wool in the county in which the holding is situated, during the year immediately preceding the one in which the order is made. Should prices during any year afterwards rise above or fall below more than ten per cent the average determined for the year previous to the fixing of the rent, the rent paid by the occupier of the holding shall, during such year, rise or fall in proportion to the rise or fall in the average prices of grain, potatoes, beef, mutton, dairy produce, and wool. And the Act of Sederunt of the twenty-first day of December, one thousand seven hundred and twenty-three, is hereby amended, in order to provide that the sheriffs' fiars in the counties in which this Bill shall apply shall strike the average wholesale prices of potatoes, beef, mutton, dairy produce, and wool in the said counties."

The Irish Land Act has been a dead failure for two reasons; first, because there is a fixed scale which, in consequence of certain things, has become a very unfair rent; and, second, because there was no provision made for the rise and fall of produce. My Amendment, therefore, is for the purpose of preventing in the Highlands a fixed rent, and to have inserted that the rent shall be determined on prices. I may say that this system which I am recommending has been in existence for years. In some parts of Scotland the Sheriff each year determines the average price of corn, and upon that the rent is fixed. We have already the machinery by which these prices can be obtained in what are called the Sheriffs' fiar's scores; and, therefore, I submit there can be no objection to adopting this course. The Courts now meet for the purpose of striking one price; but the Amendment will compel them to strike the average prices of grain, potatoes, beef, mutton, dairy produce, and wool, by having a rent which is not fixed, but is arranged on the sliding scale according to the prices of these articles. No injury could be done to the tenant or to the landlord. I cannot see that any injury could be done to the landlord. I am told that as the rents of the crofters are very small. The Amendment will be of no practical good; but, although the rents may be very small, I assure the Committee it is a very important thing for a tenant to find the prices have fallen 40 per cent, as they have done in my county during the last four months. The old system of paying rents in the Highlands is payment in kind. And now you are going to fix a fair rent, I suppose a portion of the payment will be made in kind. Well, all this Amendment will do will be to fix a rent, which will be fair to the landlord and fair to the tenant, to be paid in kind, and the only means by which this can be done is by taking into consideration the rise and fall of prices.

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, at end of sub-section (1), insert—"The Court shall schedule with their order a table of the average price of grain, potatoes, beef, mutton, dairy produce, and wool in the county in which the holding is situated, during the year immediately preceding the one in which the order is made. Should prices during any year afterwards rise above or fall below more than ten per cent the average determined for the year previous to the fixing of the rent, the rent paid by the occupier of the holding shall, during such year, rise or fall in proportion to the rise or fall in the average prices of grain, potatoes, beef, mutton, dairy produce, and wool. And the Act of Sederunt of the twenty-first day of December, one thousand seven hundred and twenty-three, is hereby amended, in order to provide that the sheriffs' fiars in the counties in which this Bill shall apply shall strike the average wholesale prices of potatoes, beef, mutton, dairy produce, and wool in the said counties."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I have very considerable sympathy with the object proposed to be effected by this Amendment, because I am of opinion that there can be no such just method of arriving at a fair rent as by having regard to the price which the produce of the holding realizes at the time. Undoubtedly, when the whole rent is to be paid in money, the result is, as we have seen during recent years, that it may become impossible, in consequence of the fall in prices, for the tenant to pay the rent. The only thing that I have a doubt about is, whether the Amendment will not be rather too complicated to be appropriate to such small holdings as those which are chiefly dealt with in this Bill. It might be applicable with advantage to holdings of £30 or over, if we were only dealing with such cases; but, as I have before pointed out, the enormous proportion of these holdings are under £4—many of them being holdings of 25*s.* and the like—and instead of these small tenants knowing each year what they have to pay, and the landlord what he has to get, they would have to enter into an actuarial calculation to work out the proportion upon these very small figures, and I am afraid that that might lead to considerable difficulty. That is the only consideration which makes me object to the Amendment; and if there is a practical way of solving that difficulty I shall be glad to entertain it. If, however, the Committee should think that the scheme will be reasonably practical for small holdings, I am willing to submit; but, at the same time, I am bound to say that I fear it is not practical.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I entirely share the sympathy of the right hon. and learned Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) in regard to this Amendment; but there are other difficulties besides those which he has mentioned which we ought not to lose sight of. There are other circumstances which ought not to be forgotten. In the first place, we cannot regard these small holdings as we regard farms which are worked solely with a view to the sale of the whole of their produce; for, in a great many cases, these small crofters consume the majority of their crops, and it is quite a matter of indifference to them whether the price of that produce is high, or whether it is low. In fact, the smaller crofters send to market hardly any of the commodities with which the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman is concerned. Then there is another point which is of even greater importance, and that is the fact that the crofts do not produce the large variety of articles named in the Amendment as those which are to form the subject of the average which is to be struck. The hon. Member says that an average can be struck on these varied articles of agricultural produce; but some crofts will only produce potatoes, others will only produce oats, barley, or wool, or other produce of that kind, and the mere fact that they do not produce the same description of crops will render the scheme of the hon. Member wholly unworkable. I think it is better, therefore, not to adopt the Amendment.

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey): I also have an Amendment down on the Paper on this subject. I think that if the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) will go to the trouble of looking at the principles of the Tithe Commutation Act, and of its working, which are based upon the principle contained in this Amendment, he will find that there are many who pay those tithes who are paying far less sums of money than many of these crofters have to pay as rent. There are tithe rent-charges based upon rents as low as 30*s.* a-year. Now, the right hon. Gentleman opposite has told us that the crofter consumes all he produces; but, however that may be, he has to pay his rent all the same. The question is, what is the value of a pound sterling to him from what he produces, and what is the value of that pound sterling to him when he has to pay his rent? What I have to say is this—that if this system of fixing the rent according to the prices of the produce had been introduced into the Irish Land Act of 1881, all the difficulties which have arisen in regard to that Act would have been obviated. Now, my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate has told us that there is a difficulty in regard to the details of a scheme such as this. Now, it has always occurred to me that one of the uses of the lawyers that we have in this House is that they should interpret into their own jargon what is the sense of the House of Commons, and I should imagine that they would be able to work out the details on this question. I venture upon saying that if my right hon. and learned Friend were to ask those persons who are at present engaged collecting the average prices of produce, he would find that the application of this system to very small rents, instead of being a difficult rule-of-three, as he seems to suppose, would be one of the easiest things possible. Very small rents can be paid in money value payable in kind, and I want to see that system introduced. Payment should be made upon the value of what the agriculturist procures. I argued some time ago that it would be impossible to settle the Irish Land Question unless we settled it upon the principle of tithe-rent averages. The only fault is the length of time over which the tithe-rent averages are carried; but shorten that period, and I think the difficulties will all be removed. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman will give us some assurance that he will consider this matter I think the matter might now be left over to Report. With regard to this system, I am of opinion that the difficulties are small; that the conveniences are great; that the interpretation is easy; and I venture to say that the results will be good. I think I may venture to say that I have the warmest approval of the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) in this matter; and I hope my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate will see that the system is a desirable one.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I have been watching for the introduction of this Amendment for a long time, because I think it is the natural and logical sequel of any attempt at the assessment of rent. For my own part, I am opposed in principle to the assessment of rents as proposed in this Bill, because I think it would be better to stick to simple contract and short notices between landlord and tenant; but if you assess the rent, you ought also to assess the value of the produce of the soil on which the rent is raised; and I do not see how the principle is to work, unless we adopt in some form the proposal which has been made by the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark). I do not think, however, that the words he has proposed will work out without further addition and extension; I think it would be more satisfactory, therefore, if the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate would look into this question, and bring up an Amendment on Report, which would embody the principle in a practical method of carrying it out.

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): For my part, I venture to submit to the Committee that this Amendment comprises a very valuable suggestion, and I do not think it is open to the objections which have been stated against it by the right hon. Member for Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour). The right hon. Member's arguments appear to me to amount to this—he urged that the proposal was not a suitable one in regard to the large proportion of the produce of the crofts which is consumed by the crofter; but, if that is so, I venture to think that the crofter ought not to pay at all, because it is only after what is to be consumed has been consumed that the question of rent should arise at all. I do not think that the rent ought to be paid out of the fishing of a crofter, and we are to assume that it ought to be paid out of the croft itself. It is upon the surplus which a crofter has after he has fed himself and his family that the question of rent arises at all. It should only be upon that part of the produce which goes to market that the element of value should enter, and the question of rent arise; and, therefore, that part of the right hon. Gentleman's argument falls to the ground altogether. Then his second objection is that the crofters do not produce the same things. Well, the remedy for that is easy; and I think that the matter is dealt with in an Amendment by my hon. Friend the Member for Bermondsey (Mr. Thorold Rogers), which provides that the rent shall be paid in produce—in so much meal, in so much oats, or so much corn. The precedent of the tithe-rent charges shows that the very smallest sums can be estimated. The principle is a natural one, and, so far from being inapplicable to small holdings, I think it is particularly suitable for them. I therefore hope that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will accept the principle of the Amendment, and that he will undertake to adjust the clause before the Report stage of the Bill is taken.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): I think that the principle of the Amendment is an exceedingly desirable one; but, at the same time, it appears to me that the details will require some amendment.

Sir Joseph Pease

Mr. GOSCHEN (Edinburgh, E.): There is just one point in connection with this matter which I should like to see cleared up, and it is this. Does not the ability of the tenant to pay rent very often depend as much on the quantity of produce he obtains as upon the price which it fetches? When the prices are high the crofter is to pay a higher rent; but these prices may be high on account of the scarcity of the produce he is selling. He may have so little to sell that the high prices will not recoup his loss; and the consequence may be that the period of high prices may be a time of pressure on the tenant; so that it may be very difficult for him to pay the high rent, and *vice versâ*. A sliding scale, therefore, might have the opposite effect to that which the hon. Gentleman desires. I think it is worth considering whether that might not be the effect of the principle which has been suggested. The point is worth considering, at least, although I do not insist upon it.

Sir HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton): It would be impossible to frame clauses to meet every difficulty which may arise; but with all deference to the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Goschen), whose opinion is always valuable, it is a fact that when prices are high the farmer generally is benefited by them. I hope that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will withdraw his objection to the Amendment. My right hon. Friend who sits below me (Mr. A. J. Balfour) appears to think that this is a novel principle; but I venture to say that there is nothing novel about it. It is quite a primitive system; and I cannot help thinking that if the system of sliding rents had not been universally abandoned as it has been, a great many of the difficulties which have arisen with regard to the management of land might have been avoided. I would urge the Committee to look favourably upon the Amendment; and if the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) does not feel able to accept it at once, at all events I hope he will take it into consideration, and see if it cannot be brought up in some form at a later stage. I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman based his objection to the Amendment on the difficulty of the calculation in regard to small holdings; but that calculation has to be made annually already for other purposes, and I think it could easily be applied to the matter of rent.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): It appears to me that we have entered into a matter which it is very difficult to discuss at this time of night. I am afraid that it will be impossible to work the plan of the hon. Member (Dr. Clark) exactly as it stands—to make it compulsory to pay by grain, or wheat, or whatever it may be. My own impression is, the existing fiar's system ought to be extended so as to cover the prices of barley and oats, and beef and mutton, and that the Commissioners ought to be allowed to decide on one or the other, having regard to the circumstances of the holding. In Scotland a half-grain half-money system of fixing rent has prevailed; but changing circumstances favour first one and then the other. Therefore, I do think that it is an exceedingly difficult question—first, whether you are to fix the rents in money or in produce; and, secondly, if you are to fix them for 15 years or any longer period. That, I believe, is the rock on which the Irish Land Act has split; because, since 1881, there has been a complete revolution in prices. If the Government can arrange for this matter to be postponed till a later stage I shall be very glad.

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey): The only way you can ask the crofter to pay rent on a fair basis is to enable him to pay it in accordance with the price that he has got for it. By doing this, we shall get rid of the theory that the cause of the losses to the tenants is the result of the extortion of the landlords. The losses to the tenants would then be due to the prices in the market, or to bad seasons; and, therefore, I earnestly hope that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will be able to see his way to deal with this matter.

Dr. CLARK: I shall be glad to withdraw my Amendment with the consent of the Committee, in order that the matter may be brought up again on Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to move, Sir, that you report Progress.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Macfarlane,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

POOR RELIEF (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

[BILL 155.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It is not necessary, in moving that this Bill be now read a second time, that I should detain the House at any length in stating the circumstances that justify the proposals that I have to lay before the House. In 1883 Parliament passed an Act for the relief of certain distressed Unions in the West of Ireland, the provision being for a grant out of the Church Surplus Fund not exceeding £50,000 in all. Under the operation of that Act only £10,352 15*s.* was actually granted, and the operation of the Act came to its legal end. Unfortunately, the necessity for relief in the West of Ireland, which moved Parliament in 1883, has not passed away. It is well known to hon. Gentlemen from Ireland, and to many Englishmen and Scotchmen, that the distress in parts of the Western Unions and districts of Ireland is at this moment most acute and extreme. The distress arises, in the first place, from the failure of the potato crop, followed by the impossibility of getting a market for cattle, and also from the failure of credit. I need not quote figures to prove that very great poverty exists in the Unions mentioned in the Schedule of this Bill; but I may say that the resources of these Unions are absolutely unable to bear the pressure of any further rate. The proposals of the Bill are two. First, it revives the two expired sections of the Act of 1883, subject to some slight modifications, and empowers the Local Government Board to make grants not exceeding the unexpired balance of £40,000 of the Act of 1883. But no grant will be made unless the Local Government Board, in consideration of the financial condition of the Union, and after considering the pressure of distress on its resources, is convinced of the absolute necessity of the grant; and no grant will be made under the Bill after the 31st of March, 1887. The second proposal goes beyond the Act of 1883, in what, I admit, is a very important particular indeed; for we ask Parliament to relax the strictness of the existing laws in respect of the grant of outdoor relief, not only in the scheduled Unions, but all over Ireland. The law since 1862, as hon. Gentlemen representing Ireland are well aware, is that no person in the occupation of more than a quarter of an acre of land can receive relief, except in the workhouse. I now propose, subject to certain restrictive provisions, that relief shall be given to destitute persons out of the workhouse, even though they occupy more than a quarter of an acre of land. The restrictive provisions are these—first, that such relief is only to be given where the Local Government Board authorize the Boards of Guardians to give it by their order; secondly, that the order is only to be made for a couple of months at a time, though it may be renewed; thirdly—and this is a very important restriction—the relief is to be given in food only, and not in money; and, fourthly, this power is only to remain in force until the 31st of December, 1886. I would only add that this relaxation in the matter of outdoor relief in the Southern Unions is rather designed by us as a measure of precaution, in case the necessity should become very pressing, and not with any intention of setting it into operation at once, except in these particularly distressed electoral divisions on the West Coast. With these few remarks I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. John Morley.*)

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I have to thank the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland extremely for the measure he has brought in. I know every one of these five scheduled Unions; three of them I am intimately acquainted with, and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that in these districts such relief as he proposes is wanted very badly. I do not know whether the House knows it, but in two of these Unions which have been very prominently before the public lately, which include the Islands of Achill, Boffin, and the Arran Islands, the people became distressed through two opposite reasons. In Achill the crops failed for want of seed; but in Arran they failed for a very peculiar reason. The ground is very shallow there, very often the soil being only two or three inches deep. The summer was extremely hot, and the heat of the sun burnt up all the potatoes. More than that, very boisterous weather has visited the Island, and I have it from one of the Fishery Inspectors that the people have been unable to carry on the industry of fishing. Though these scheduled Unions are extremely badly off, there are Unions contiguous to them which, though not so much distressed, are still wretchedly poor. There are two or three electoral divisions, such as Tuam and Loughrea, which deserve to be put in the same category as the scheduled Unions, and which, if they were included, would find it much to their advantage. The general scope of the right hon. Gentleman's proposal is extremely satisfactory, and removes a great blot upon the existing regulations. At present, in cases where the head of family occupies a holding of two or three acres, it is impossible to give relief in the ordinary way, no matter to what extent it may be needed, no matter how much sickness there may be in the house, or to what depth of distress the people may be reduced. Of course, things cannot go on in this way. Though the Guardians themselves are unable to give relief in these cases the Relieving Officers are able to do it. Occasionally, I know, they used to do it, and the Guardians used to recoup them for it; indeed, the Guardians used to tell them that if they did distribute such relief they would be recouped. This sort of thing did not, of course, take place on a large scale; for, if it had, it would have been extremely irregular. However, this great blot in the existing Poor Law in Ireland will be removed by the right hon. Gentleman's Bill. I sincerely hope that the measure may be passed through expeditiously. It will produce the very best effect, especially when amended in one or two particulars. Though it is a good Bill it is not everything. We want something else—something in the nature of public works in the West of Ireland.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): The few observations I feel bound to make on this Bill I think I ought to preface by thanking the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland very heartily. I am bound to say that, so far as I understand the condition of the West of Ireland, this is a sterling generous provision for the necessities of the people there. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will believe me when I say that in the few observations I feel it necessary to make my desires and objects are twofold; in the first place, that relief should reach the people who are absolutely in need of it as soon as possible, and as effectually as possible, particularly in the West; and, secondly, that there should be the greatest possible economy, and no abuse of the use of this Act. I believe myself that, as was found to be the case in 1883, the whole of the money the right hon. Gentleman places at our disposal will not be necessary if the Bill is properly used. I will point out what I consider would be a great improvement in the Bill. We all desire to see it passed through Committee and brought into operation as soon as possible; but I would suggest that if the Chief Secretary can see his way to the insertion of a small sub-section in Section 3, granting to the Lord Lieutenant the same discretion as there is a precedent for in the Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act, with regard to the manner in which the Commissioners of Public Works are entitled to make grants, he should do it. In the 20th section of the Arrears of Rent Act they are entitled to grant loans to any Union, or such other body or persons, and on such terms as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland may think proper. That seems to me to form a very excellent precedent; and what I desire to carry out by the insertion of such a sub-section I will point out. We know that in some cases, in the remote districts where the people are now actually starving, there are relief committees in existence. In the Island of Achill, I am told, most effectual relief is now being given by one of these relief committees. In consists of the parish priest and the Protestant minister of the Island, who are working in perfect harmony, I am happy to say. Mr. Tuke himself has been there, and is favourably impressed with what has been done. Achill is 35 miles from Westport, where the Union meets; it is, therefore, desirable that this relief should be distributed in food where it is wanted, and not sent down to the Union. I am sure Mr. Tuke, who is on the spot, would give the same advice to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary that I give him here, and as anybody will who knows the district. I would suggest that he should make the relief committee at Achill—who are unquestionably above everything in the shape of maladministration, although it would be necessary to require the keeping of a most strict account as to the people to whom the relief is given—the distributors of this relief. I am prepared to leave the matter to the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant, as advised by the Inspectors of the Local Government Board; but I would urge that he should be allowed, in his discretion, to advance money. Money would reach the distressed people more promptly, and there would be less danger of waste and of maladministration than would be the case in the adoption of other forms of relief. This would be by far the best way of relieving people who are actually hungry. And I think it would probably be possible to treat all the Islands in the same way. The Westport Guardians have no machinery for the proper distribution of relief amongst the people of this Island of Achill. It would take a fortnight to reach the people—and it is obviously out of the question for these people to come into Westport to receive it. The Island of Clare is a long way off, as also are the Islands of Boffin and Innistock. In some cases the distressed districts are 40 miles from the place where the Guardians meet. I wish to make another observation. There is a gentleman named Brady, one of the Fishery Commissioners, who has exerted himself in the most praiseworthy manner to relieve these people. This gentleman has got not alone the confidence of the people, but a knowledge of these matters, which none of the Guardians can have, for they are for the most part business men, who cannot spend their time going about amongst the people as Mr. Brady does. He has not only got the confidence of the Guardians and of the people, but of the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin; therefore it is likely, if this discretion is given to the Lord Lieutenant, that he may instruct Mr. Brady and Mr. Tuke to carry out useful relief in these Islands. We, and all persons interested in the relief of this distressed population, are united in this opinion—that, except where families are in sickness from the depth of their poverty, it would be less demoralizing to distribute the relief through the assistance of such gentlemen as those I have named than the Guardians. I think, at any rate, the Lord Lieutenant might be left to act on his own discretion, assisted by the Local Government Board. I think a certain amount of this money—after the necessary amount of food has been afforded to this starving population—might, under the direction of Mr. Brady and Mr. Tuke, and the local gentlemen with whom they act or are in communication, be made to confer great benefit on these people by being spent on the improvement of piers. With these few suggestions, which I hope the right hon. Gentleman will see his way to adopt, I will conclude by urging him to put down the Committee on the Bill for as early a day as he can.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I am as anxious as anyone to avoid the demoralization which attaches to the distribution of relief in money, and to see this relief is given, as much as possible, in kind; but I would point out that in places like the Island of Arran, which is 40 miles away from Galway, it would be more economical to give a few shillings to the people than to give the money's worth in food. The people would be much better able to buy their own bread stuffs than the Guardians could buy it and send it out to them. In the same way, Achill is 30 or 40 miles from Westport, and 1*s.* in money to one of the starving people there would go a great deal farther than if spent for him by the Guardians—probably, if spent by the Guardians, every 1*s.* the poor receive will cost the Guardians 1*s.* 4*d.*, for it would cost a great deal to send the relief in kind across the Channel from the mainland. I have never been able to understand why the Islands of Arran have been allowed to be attached to the Galway Union. It has always appeared to me that it would be much easier for the people of those places to run into Clifden, the journey by sea being much shorter. With regard to the clause dealing with the quarter-of-an-acre provision, it seems to me that such a clause should be rendered permanent. The provision was passed in the days of Sir William Gregory, at a time when so much was said about political economy. But the political theories of that day are dead and gone for ever. We have got a long way beyond that age. You even treat the labourers now with some measure of justice and generosity. Of course, English Members will understand that we are getting this money out of an Irish fund. I cannot help pointing out the extraordinary contrast there is in the manner in which we are getting it to the manner in which we used to obtain measures from former Governments. I attribute to this change the peacefulness and orderly demeanour of the people of Ireland, who know now that they have a sympathetic power at the head of affairs. I cannot help contrasting the present state of affairs with that which prevailed in 1883. In that year the people of Tralee were told practically that they might starve, or go to the workhouse. I think the right hon. Gentleman, as well as Ireland, is to be congratulated on the existing state of things.

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): The Bill as it stands, if it is well administered, will do a considerable amount of good. At the same time, I am bound to express great regret that the measure is limited in the extent of its duration, and that in it the right hon. Gentleman proposes to give assistance to the distressed population in no other method than by way of charity. If the people in the West of Ireland who are now suffering from distress were able to look forward to the coming harvest with confidence the scope of the Bill would be sufficient; but many of the people have beeen unable to sow their crops during the present spring, and these will have to look forward to casual employment as a means of subsistence. I think, therefore, that, in order to have been adequate to the occasion, the Bill should have contained provisions to enable these people to seed their ground. If the Bill is allowed to run to June, 1887, those people who have lost their crops this year will be able to live until they can crop their land again next spring. Unless this is done, if it can be proved that continued relief is necessary next year, it will be necessary to come forward and ask for another measure in 1887. I think that should be avoided, if possible, and that we should do the thing at once. I trust that the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) will be favourably considered. The Government method of distributing relief, through the Guardians, is a method neither the most efficient nor the most economical; and, on the other hand, these local committees that the hon. Gentleman has spoken of are composed of people of zeal, who are able to bring intelligence and judgment to bear upon the case. I trust that something will be done in the way of amending the Schedule of the Relief Act of 1880, and of allowing the relief committees to administer part of the funds to the poor in these districts. I have felt most acute disappointment at the absence from the Bill of anything to make provision for the construction of boat slips or piers in the Western Islands. Mr. Tuke, and those with whom he has acted, the local clergy, and the Press of Ireland, all look upon that as the only true way to relieve the Western Islands. To allay existing pangs of hunger the Bill will be sufficient, no doubt; but in the Western Islands these periods of distress are recurrent; and careful critics who go into this matter very fully declare that the only way to give these poor people anything like real and lasting relief is to build them a few boat slips or piers. That will not be giving them money, consequently it will not injure their self-respect, and will not demoralize them, whilst it will give them an effectual means of maintaining themselves. I do trust the Board of Works, or some other Department, will have a moderate sum placed in its hands which, if no demands are made for it, they may share out to the most distressed localities for boat slips. I trust, further, that there will be no restrictions enacted in the clauses which will prevent any relief that may be given being given promptly. If there are to be restrictions framed by the Local Government Board, the Board are likely to frame restrictions which will do away with the usefulness of the measure. There is an open sea-board in County Donegal, and the population living upon it, thousands and tens of thousands of them, are in the deepest distress. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he cannot include this one district in the Schedule? Then there is an omission from the Bill. The Act of 1880 contained a provision for giving relief in fuel, which is as necessary as relief in food; but no such provision is contained in this Bill. In the Western Islands there are no means of obtaining fuel locally, and the people, in seasons of distress, suffer keenly from the want of it. I hope that omission is an inadvertence.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): I hope that the Government will promise to accede to the proposal of my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. T. M. Healy), who now represents, I think, South Derry; but he has been chosen by so many constituencies that one is liable to forget for which constituency he has elected to sit. I speak with some experience on the subject of this Bill; and I can assure the House that in many places the poor would prefer to receive 1*s.* 6*d.* in money to 2*s.* 6*d.* in kind. I trust the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary will see his way to accepting the proposition of my hon. and learned Friend; and I feel certain that if he does the Bill will work to the good of the people.

Lord FREDERICK HAMILTON (Manchester, S.W.): I merely rise for the purpose of saying a few words to endorse the remarks of the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) as to the necessity for the construction of boat slips and piers or small harbours of refuge on the West Coast of Ireland. No one who has been there and has seen the miserably inadequate accommodation that exists for the fishermen can have any other idea than that works of that character for the relief of the distress of the people cannot assume a more useful form than boat slips, piers, or harbours.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I think that a provision should be inserted in the Bill by which it would be clearly understood that those accepting relief under the measure shall not lose their rights under the Franchise Act. An exceptional measure of this kind should contain no disfranchising clauses; and unless such a provision as I refer to is inserted, a large number of people will lose the right of voting at Parliamentary elections.

Mr. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): I have only a few words to address to the House on this occasion. I observe in the Bill, that there are only five Unions mentioned, and I think that having regard to the amount of distress which exists in Ireland at present the measure should have a wider extension and scope. It is a well-known fact that in the Southern parts of Ireland, as well, also, as in other parts of the country, there is very great distress. In the county of Donegal there are Unions and electoral divisions which deserve to be included within the scope and operation of the Bill quite as much as those Unions which are scheduled. I would wish to get from the Chief Secretary for Ireland an assurance that some of the districts I refer to would also reap the advantages that this measure is meant to confer. In the Northern parts of Ireland, in the county of Donegal, there are Unions, notably that of Dunfanaghy, in which the district of Gweedore is situated, where the people are perpetually fighting the desperate battle of life with seaweed—who have only this miserable food to protect them from absolute famine and starvation. I hope that this Bill is intended for the purpose of mitigating the sufferings of the people of these districts that I may call famine-stricken districts, and that they will be included within the scope and operation of this Bill before the House. I should like to get some assurance from the right hon. Gentleman that these districts will be included. With the general principle of the Bill we all agree; but why these districts which are so exceptionally visited with hardship and starvation should be omitted I do not know. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will be able to inform the House that he is in a position to include these districts in addition to the five he has mentioned in this Bill.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.): I will not trouble the House at this period with more than a very few words. I fully endorse everything that has been said by my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), as to the desirability of doing something in this Bill to facilitate the construction of piers and harbours and ordinary boat slips. That I believe would be a most suitable method of relieving the distress. I would again draw the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to a case which has come under my own observation, that of Inishmurry Island. I drew the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to it, and since then, and after receiving his reply, I received a communication with regard to it from a gentleman with whom I am totally unacquainted. I will only read one extract from this letter. It says that the memorial referred to was signed by Dr. Gilhooly, as Bishop of the diocese in which the Island is situated, who was conversant by personal experience with the truth of the facts stated. It was also signed by Dr. Healy, another local Bishop. I have merely to say that the gentleman who has so written to me seems to be perfectly alive to the necessity of carrying out the work I refer to. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will see that this will be the best form in which public money can be spent.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): By the permission of the House I desire to say that I will give my best attention to the suggestions that have been made. A provision with regard to boats slips and piers would have occupied no inconsiderable amount of time, and as there was no time to be lost it was not included in the Bill. The object in view, however desirable, must—as I am at present advised—be the subject of future legislation. With regard to the suggestion of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), I do not like, without more mature consideration, to accept it. I will do the best I can; and I believe we may find some means of giving effect to it.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

PRISON OFFICERS SUPERANNUATION BILL.—[BILL 154.]

(*Sir Edward Reed, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE LORD OF THE TREASURY: (Sir EDWARD J. REED) (Cardiff): This Bill, of which I rise to move the second reading, is little more than a Declaratory Bill. The Naval Discipline Act of 1879 distinguished between offences of a military and ordinary character, and a certain portion of the prisons were appropriated for the former. A question then arose whether the Regulations of the Secretary of State of 1877 were applicable to those prisons which had passed to the control of the Army and Navy authorities. One of the consequences was that certain officers have been deprived of their pensions, and it is to rectify that that the present Bill is introduced.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Edward J. Reed.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I think it right that the officers who do the work should be remunerated; but the action of the Government in this matter is unequal—they seem to single out a certain class of officers for pensions. Officers in lunatic asylums, for instance, are treated in quite a different manner from others. I am glad the Bill has been introduced; but I think that the Government should deal with the Public Service in this respect as a whole and upon one principle.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

COPYHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—[Bill 26.]

(*Mr. Charles James, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Stafford Howard, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Mellor.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 23rd March.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 5 (Consequence of lord's failure to give notice).

On the Motion of Mr. Charles James, the following Amendments made:—In page 2, line 14, after "enrolment," insert "or death or alienation;" and in line 15, after "steward," insert "nor shall the land be liable to escheat or forfeiture to the lord."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 6 (Mode and costs of ascertaining compensation if not ascertained under preceding provisions).

On the Motion of Mr. Charles James, the following Amendment made:—In page 3, line 14, at end, add—

"The Commissioners shall have power to extend the period of six months hereinbefore mentioned as they shall see fit, on the joint application of the lord and tenant."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 7, 8, and 9, severally *agreed to.*

Clause 10 (As to duties of valuer and umpire).

Viscount GRIMSTON (Herts, St. Albans): I rise to move the omission from the clause of the words which provide that the valuers shall in every case deliver the details of the valuation to the Commissioners, who, if it appears to them incorrect, may remit the valuation for reconsideration and correction; and if the valuer neglects or refuses to amend the valuation, the Commissioners may determine the value of the various rights and incidents at such sum as they may deem just and reasonable. I trust the Committee will accept the Amendment. Why the Commissioners should revise the decision of the valuers I cannot understand. It is most natural to suppose that the best person as valuer will be chosen, and that he will be perfectly conversant with the facts of the case. The Commission, I imagine, will not have an opportunity of viewing the land; and any steps taken to ascertain the value of the manorial rights and incidents would involve great additional trouble and expense. The natural result of this rule being followed would be that the Commissioners would go by what I may call rule of thumb, which would act very unfairly; and in this I speak as much on behalf of the copyhold tenant as the lord.

Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 32, to leave out all after "to prescribe" to the end of the Clause.—(*Viscount Grimston.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL (Mr. Mellor) (Grantham): I hope the noble Viscount will not press this Amendment. The object of the clause is very plain. It was inserted by the Committee because it was found that in many cases the valuations had been excessive; and it was suggested that in the cases described the Commissioners should examine the valuation, and, if necessary, send it back to the valuer.

Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): Clause 11 gives the Commissioners power to frame and publish a scale of compensation; and unless they have the opportunity of revising the decisions arrived at between the valuers it would be useless to give them the power of fixing a scale of compensation. Clause 11 is, to a certain extent, associated with Clause 10; and if this Amendment were agreed to, the two clauses would have to be reconstructed.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): It seems to me that if this clause makes the valuation of the valuer useless we had better confine ourselves to the valuation of the Commission.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 11 (Commissioners to publish a scale of compensation).

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I suggest that it would be desirable, at a later stage of the Bill, to put in words to control the discretion of the Commissioners.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): Unless the hon. Member has an Amendment to move before the next on the Paper he is out of Order in his remarks.

On the Motion of Mr. CHARLES JAMES, the following Amendments made:—In page 5, lines 1 and 8, after "shall," leave out "from time to time;" and in line 10, at end, add—"The Commissioners may, from time to time, vary any such scales."

Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I venture to suggest that, at some later stage of the Bill, we should place some control on the absolute discretion of the Commissioners to frame and publish a scale of compensation. If a clause were inserted that every scale of compensation should be laid upon the Table of the House, and not be operative until a certain time had elapsed, I think it would be only imposing a wholesome restriction upon this very arbitrary power which is vested in the Commissioners. This scale is one which, although it is in the nature of a recommendation, will practically fix the amount of compensation; and it is desirable, when you are giving such great power to Commissioners, that they should be under a sense of responsibility. Therefore, I suggest to the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill the desirability of insuring, in some form, that this wide discretion should be exercised with care and judgment. I have no doubt of the desire to do justice on the part of the Commissioners; but, as it is quite unprecedented to give such a power as the clause confers upon them, I suggest that it should be limited in the direction which I have indicated.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clauses 12 and 13 severally *agreed to.*

Clause 14 (In case of death proceedings not to abate).

On the Motion of Mr. CHARLES JAMES, the following Amendment made:—In page 6, line 5, after "eighty," leave out "five," and insert "six."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 15 (Compensation to be secured by rent-charge).

VISCOUNT GRIMSTON (St. Albans): It would be hard on the lord that there should be power to create a rent-charge where the amount is so low as £2 per annum; and my object is to prevent the creation of a multitude of small rent-charges. It is well known that the steward receives certain fees for collecting quit-rents; but when this Bill becomes law the lord will have to pay another person for collecting these charges, and, practically, the major part of the amount of the rent-charge would be swallowed up in the cost of collection.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 28, after "award," insert "if it exceeds the sum of fifty pounds such compensation."—(*Viscount Grimston.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): This is one of a series of Amendments to the clause, and its effect is to introduce an entirely new principle in connection with the enfranchisement of copyhold. The effect of the Amendment is to impose upon the tenant, when compelled to enfranchise, the liability to pay money down in lieu of a rent-charge. ["No, no!"] The noble Viscount denies that; but such is the effect of his Amendment. Instead of the lord receiving a small rent-charge, he is to receive a capital sum. The noble Viscount proposes that the lord is to receive a sum of money down, or, in effect, larger compensation than would otherwise be awarded to him. That is introducing altogether a new principle in the law of enfranchisement, to the benefit of the lord and at the charge of the tenant; and it is one to which, in my opinion, the Committee ought not to assent. It is admitted by the noble Viscount that it gives an advantage to the lord, and I submit that such ought not to be given.

VISCOUNT GRIMSTON: But I say that the advantage to the lord would disappear. There is a clause in the Bill under which the copyhold tenant can raise money for the purpose of paying off the lord, which would enable him to do this without creating an annual rent-charge. Under my Amendment the tenant would save this extra charge.

MR. T. H. BOLTON: In other words, the tenant would have to go to the expense of a mortgage to raise money on the land for the benefit of the lord.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL (Mr. MELLOR) (Grantham): I am afraid it would be impossible for the Government to accept the Amendment; because, as has been pointed out, the small copyholder would have to pay down a sum which would be an inconvenience to him, and the object of the Bill is to make enfranchisement easy for small copyholders. If the Amendment were accepted, he would not only have to pay compensation to the lord, but compensation to the steward, and he would have to pay a fine. Under the circumstances, I hope the noble Viscount will not press his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 15 and 16 severally *agreed to.*

Clause 17 (Declaration to be made by lord or steward).

On the Motion of Mr. CHARLES JAMES, the following Amendments made:—In page 7, line 35, after "award," insert "or deed;" and in line 35, leave out "this Act," and insert "the Copyhold Acts."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 18 to 22 severally *agreed to.*

Clauses 23 to 26, inclusive, severally *agreed to,* with Amendments.

Clauses 27 to 30, inclusive, severally *agreed to.*

Clause 31 (Saving power to enfranchise by deed).

On the Motion of Viscount GRIMSTON, the following Amendment made:—In page 13, line 36, after "lord," insert "or other parties by direction of any lord."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 32 to 46, inclusive, severally *agreed to,* with Amendments.

Clause 47 (Costs of enfranchisement).

On the Motion of Mr. CHARLES JAMES, the following Amendment made:—In lines 15 and 16, leave out "commenced and made after the passing," and insert "by award after next admittance or enrolment made under the provisions."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 48 to 55, inclusive, *agreed to,* with Amendments.

VISCOUNT GRIMSTON (St. Alban's), in rising to move the insertion of a new clause, said: I will endeavour to show the injury which this clause is intended to remedy. Let the Committee imagine that the whole of this House is a sporting manor—that the two Benches are a freehold, and that the floor is copyhold. It is obvious that if the floor were enfranchised, the benches would be of no value for sporting; so, in the case of an acre of land in the midst of a field, the owner might sit there all day long and shoot the game. It is to endeavour to remedy such an injustice that I ask that the clause may be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."—(*Viscount Grimston.*)

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. BROADHURST) (Birmingham, Bordesley): I think it likely that there may not be much opposition to the clause; but, having regard to the fact that several hon. Members present wish for an opportunity of considering it, I think it would be well that Progress should be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Broadhurst.*)

MR. STAFFORD HOWARD (Gloucester, Thornbury): I do not wish to express any opinion upon the clause now; but shall reserve my judgment upon the matter.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

BANKRUPTCY (OFFICE ACCOMMODATION) ACT (1885) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Bill to amend "The Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act, 1885," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Henry H. Fowler.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 161.]

PREVENTION OF HYDROPHOBIA BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Macfarlane, Bill to give power to the Home Secretary to make regulations for the prevention of the spread of Hydrophobia throughout the United Kingdom, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Macfarlane, Dr. Cameron, Mr. M'Iver, and Dr. Farquharson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 162.]

House adjourned at half after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 2nd *April*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILL—*First Reading*—Army (Annual) * (55).

PARLIAMENT—PRIVATE BILLS—STANDING ORDER, No. 128.

RESOLUTION.

THE EARL OF REDESDALE (CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES) laid on the Table a Memorandum respecting Standing Order, No. 128. (No interest out of capital to be paid on calls), and moved that the same be printed. He thought it desirable that this Memorandum should be printed and circulated before several Bills came up to this House from the other House of Parliament, in order that their Lordships might be fully aware of the real difficulties of the case, and know what reasons there were for the payment of interest out of capital.

Motion *agreed to.*

Memorandum laid on the Table, and to be *printed.* (No. 56.)

HARBOURS OF REFUGE (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND).

ADDRESS FOR RETURNS.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, in rising to move for—

> "Returns of monies advanced on loan within the last five years towards the construction and improvement of large and small harbours of refuge in Great Britain and Ireland:"

and to ask Her Majesty's Government, Whether they had decided to what amount they were now prepared to advance money on loans with that object; and in the event of their being so prepared, in what localities they would recommend that the monies should be first applied? said, he must complain that, although this object of great national importance had received the sanction of different Committees of Parliament, from the Report of the Committee which sat in 1859 down to that of the Marjoribanks Committee of a few years ago, and their Reports had been accepted with approbation by Ministers of successive Governments, scarcely anything, if anything, had been done. Mr. Chamberlain, indeed, was reported to have told a deputation which waited upon him that harbours of refuge would be of very little good although constructed; but had Mr. Chamberlain made such a statement as a candidate before a seafaring constituency he probably would have lost his election, and the remark was not received with anything like approbation by those present. The best of sailors were at all times glad to know that they had harbours to which they could conveniently run if necessity arose. The infrequency of them, he believed, had a prejudicial effect upon a most important industry. At one part of the Coast, he observed, the amount of fish landed annually represented something like £3,000,000 sterling. That was an important matter of national interest; and it demonstrated to him that if these harbours were established the fishing trade would be increased, as would also be the number of those who volunteered for a seafaring life, which were matters of such enormous importance to this country. Now, what he wanted to know was whether the Government, having given their approbation to this measure, would really carry it out, and whether they had formed any plan for the construction of harbours? It had been recently stated, on behalf of the Government, that no money could be expended on this object except in the way of loans. He would like to know what security the Government would accept for advancing such loans, and to ask whether they would send duly qualified persons around the Coasts to inspect suitable localities? It was vain, he submitted, to expect adequate security from local rates in poor and thinly-populated localities; and it would not be fair that these rates should be extended to localities not immediately connected with the sea. He denied, however, that this was a question of local interest only; the great loss of life around our Coasts, and care of the men engaged in the coasting trade, in boating, and in mercantile ships, who in number might be put down at 300,000 men, were matters of vast Imperial consequence. When it was stated that other Governments had done less than the English Government in providing harbours of refuge, he could only say that that was not a strong argument, because a large amount of what had been expended had been for strategic purposes; and, moreover, the interests of this country in this regard were tenfold greater than those of any other. France had expended for mercantile purposes no less than £5,000,000 within nine or 10 years, while, as regards Spain, whose Government was not usually very forward in public enterprizes, he had been perfectly amazed to see the enormous improvements effected in the harbours of that country.

Address for—

"Returns of monies advanced on loan within the last five years towards the construction and improvement of large and small harbours of refuge in Great Britain and Ireland."—(*The Viscount Sidmouth.*)

THE PAYMASTER GENERAL (Lord THURLOW) said, the important subject which the noble Viscount had brought forward was one which had for a considerable time been receiving the attention of Her Majesty's Government. He was glad to be able to state on behalf of the Treasury that there was no objection whatever to the production of the Return moved for, and it would be prepared with all due despatch. As regards the general question, it might be, perhaps, convenient that he should explain very shortly how the matter stood. The question of the construction of harbours of refuge had to be considered jointly with the Board of Trade and the Treasury. In the first instance, the recommendations as regards certain localities were made by the Board of Trade, and forwarded by that Department to the Treasury. By the latter they were considered and sent for examination and report to the Public Works Loan Commissioners, and it was their duty to go into each case in considerable detail, and to judge each case according to its merits. When that Report had been received the recommendations were embodied in an Estimate, and that Estimate was entered in the Public Works Loan Bill for that year. The ultimate decision in that way rested with the other House of Parliament, as having charge of financial legislation. There never had been, so far as he understood, any curtailment, or any desire to curtail any expense on this account that had been so recommended. The recommendations had been inserted in each case in full, and as such had gone to the other House of Parliament and been decided by it. There were various points referred to by the noble Lord. There was, first, locality, then the cost of construction, then it had to be considered whether the expense to be incurred would in each case be unmitigated loss, or would in the course of years bring in a revenue, so that the works would be reproductive. In the latter case, the whole or part of the cost of such harbour works ought to be borne by the locality, and especially by those whose property had been increased in value. Much consideration, therefore, ought to be given to each proposal on its own merits, and no general rule could be laid down. Then, as regarded the employment of labour, it should be remembered that, in the first instance, skilled workmen only would be required, and they ought to be careful how far they made a call upon such labour, as it would be unwise to undertake a very large quantity of such harbour work at any given time. But he could assure the noble Viscount that the matter should receive the attention of the Treasury and of the Board of Trade. There was no objection to the Return, which should be prepared with all despatch.

THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH said, he thought it desirable to remove a common misapprehension. It was commonly supposed that nothing had been done;

but the Local Taxation Returns would show that immense sums of money had already been expended in harbour works. On the Mersey, by the last Return, for 1883-4 the outstanding loans were about £16,000,000, and on the Tyne £3,800,000. At Swansea the loan amounted to about £240,000. Thirty years ago he had been appointed to inquire into the subject, and he found that nothing was so popular or plausible as to recommend extensive harbour construction. Everywhere there was anxiety to get public money. But he was perfectly convinced that if it was desired effectively to save human life, it could not be done better than by deepening existing harbours. He would suggest to his noble Friend that there should be added to his Motion, after the word "amount," the words "at what rate of interest and for what term of years," as that would give important information to the public.

Lord THURLOW said, he would inquire whether the Return could be made out in the form suggested by the noble Earl; but it would be more convenient to agree with the Motion in its original form. He would take care to acquaint the Treasury with the noble Earl's suggestion. He did not think there would be any difficulty in acceding to the noble Earl's request; and if it could be done it should be done.

Address *agreed to.*

COLONIES.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

The Earl of HARROWBY, in rising to move for—

> "All Papers addressed to the Colonial Office during the last twelve months in favour of State-directed colonization, as well as for any papers addressed to the Colonial Office requesting that official information for those who desired to become colonists should be supplied to the post offices and local authorities throughout the country;"

and to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, How far Her Majesty's Government would be able to meet the wishes of the important deputations which had brought those subjects before the Colonial Office? said, he was quite sure that any means of relieving the present distressed condition of the labour market would be welcomed by their Lordships. In 1883 his noble Friend (the Earl of Carnarvon) brought the subject before the House in great detail, and the noble Earl who was then at the Colonial Office made a very interesting reply. The Colonial Secretary then said that there was nothing wrong in principle in the State's promoting colonization. He did not wish to bind himself or anyone else, but simply desired their Lordships to face the dangerous state of things which now existed. In reading the Reports of the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade, he could not but be struck with the terrific increase of population in these Islands. In the course of 10 years, from 1871 to 1881, about 3,250,000, or nearly the population of London, had been added to England and Wales alone, and since the last Census nearly 1,500,000 more must have come into existence. London itself increased at the rate of 45,000 annually. This was surely a very serious matter, and it explained, to a great extent, some of the difficulties under which we now laboured, and that fact alone ought to lead us to seek a remedy for the evils which threatened us in the future. Then they had to consider the change which was being effected in agriculture. There was every reason to fear that agriculture must provide less and less occupation every year. Between 1871 and 1881 1,000,000 acres had been converted from arable to pasture, and in 1881 the number of proprietors and attendants on agricultural machines had increased to 4,200 from 2,100 in 1871, which explained, to a great extent, the displacement of manual labour that was going on in the country. As proving still further the falling movement in the country districts, they had only to look to the dwellers in the towns. In 1861 there were 172 dwellers in towns to every 100 in the country; but in 1871 the proportion had risen to 192, and in 1881 to 212. These figures told the tale of the failure of employment in the agricultural districts, and he feared this must go on more and more. There was no reason to hope that the extension of small holdings and allotments, desirable as this was, could furnish anything like an effective counteraction to this tendency. All his life he had been conversant with the system of small holdings and allotments; but he had always found that while it did good work as a supplement to wages, it could never succeed where wages fell. Nor was there any reasonable expectation that manufacturing industry would absorb our present surplus population, for it was proved that the number of hands required was constantly diminishing, although there was an increased output of manufactured goods of from 10 to 25 per cent as compared with a few years ago. The fact that there was not yet apparent much suffering among the highest class of our operatives was only evidence of the reluctance of this class to make its privations known. Every official Report which had lately been presented to the public alluded to this fact. If their Lordships studied the evidence which the Royal Commissioners laid before them, he feared that there again they would see that the prospects of our manufactures were very gloomy. Indeed, it was impossible to read the answers which were sent to the Commissioners by the Chambers of Commerce without being very anxious as to the future of our manufactures. Then there was a keen competition with foreign immigrants, who worked longer hours, were content with worse fare and poorer accommodation, and who were competing more and more with our own artizans. The prospect of our manufactures being able to supply means for this growing population was anything but promising. Then he looked to see how far emigration was affording the relief required at the present time. The figures were very curious and surprising. The English emigrants numbered 63,000 persons in 1877, 183,000 persons in 1883, 147,000 persons in 1884, and 126,000 persons in 1885. The figures relating to Scotch and Irish emigration told exactly the same tale. The number of Scotch emigrants was 8,000 in 1877, 32,000 in 1883, and 21,000 in 1885; while the number of Irish emigrants was 22,000 in 1877, 105,000 in 1883, and 60,000 in 1885. The diminished number of emigrants last year might be accounted for partly by the state of the labour market abroad and in the Colonies; but, however that might be, he contended that emigration had not afforded that relief which the state of our labour market so much required. The Returns relating to net emigration were still worse than those to which he had just referred. Taking British and Irish emigration only, after deducting immigrants from emigrants, the numbers were 31,000 persons in 1877, 246,000 persons in 1883, and 122,000 persons in 1885. These were the numbers of persons who had been actually deducted from the labour market of this country. He feared that instead of voluntary emigration being in our hour of need a great resource it was more and more ceasing to supply our need. So that we were left face to face with this very serious difficulty—that our agriculture and our manufactures were less and less able to supply our people with employment; while emigration was less and less supplying a safety valve for the population. The minds of all thinking men, whether amongst the operative classes or amongst those who sat in that House, must, in these circumstances, be turned to the Colonies. It was impossible that they should not feel that there were parts of those Colonies to which they ought to look more vigorously to utilize our surplus population. Some people spoke as if the advocates of emigration were urging the banishment of some of our best working men; but the truth was that we had got beyond the stage of thinking that settlement in the Colonies was equivalent to banishment. Probably there was hardly any noble Lord who had not some member of his family settled in one of our Colonies. He was not speaking of the "ne'er-do-well," but was referring to the change of the last 25 years, which had led to members of almost every family going to the Colonies, not as banishment, but as passing to a second home. He knew of nothing more touching than the emigrants' letters, in which they spoke of new hopes and feelings of enjoyment, and expressed their delight at the prospect of certain and regular work. This question had been brought forward on two occasions within the last 12 months. An important meeting was held at the Mansion House, and since then the noble Earl who presided over the Colonial Office received in February an important deputation headed by Lord Brabazon. That deputation represented 170,000 workmen at Manchester, Sheffield, and other places, and they made two requests. The first was for State-directed emigration—namely, State-planned new settlements, with special arrangements, and State loans to enable settlers to go out. He believed that Boards of Guardians were now empowered to use the rates for emigration. But this was a very grave and serious matter, and he would like to know more about the details of it before he gave a decided opinion in favour of it. At all events, the subject was clearly worthy of careful consideration. The second great point pressed upon the Government was that information should be given to every part of the country as to the Colonial openings—that was to say, that the Colonial Office should get the best information together, and forward it to many centres throughout the country. He believed a great deal of good would be done if that suggestion were acted upon. The noble Earl the Colonial Secretary, in replying to the deputation, said that—

> "Communications had taken place between Lord Derby and Sir F. Stanley, the Crown Agents, and the Treasury, with regard to appointing some Government Office, by which all the information bearing upon colonization and emigration should be more rapidly and universally spread in the country. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer had been for some time favourable to the establishment of such a Department."

He trusted that some decision would shortly be arrived at with regard to the formation of this new Colonization Department. The two conditions to a loan which we should have to insist upon if we pressed this colonization further were —first, that there should be an agreement with the Colonies as to whatever we did; and, secondly, that we should be careful not to send out any worthless emigrants. With these conditions he thought we might consider this larger colonization scheme with a view to action. He hoped that no fear that we might get rid of cheap labour at home would induce anybody to hold their hands on the subject. For the future we must not think of placing our prosperity on cheap labour. For any civilized country to base its prosperity on cheap labour would be to base its future on a very uncertain and unsafe ground.

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for All papers addressed to the Colonial Office during the last twelve months in favour of State-directed colonization, as well as any papers addressed to the Colonial Office requesting that official information for those who desire to become colonists should be supplied to the post offices and local authorities throughout the country."—(*The Earl of Harrowby.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Earl GRANVILLE): The noble Earl has made an interesting speech on a question of great importance, especially at the present time. He has given us some remarkable facts and figures; but I do not propose to follow him in all his statements, though I shall guard myself against being supposed to agree with all the inferences which he drew from those facts and figures. The principal point on which he dwelt was the importance of emigration and colonization. I have no doubt these two things, if properly conducted, can be made of great use both at home and in the Colonies. In regard to State-aided emigration and State-aided colonization, the matter is one of great difficulty and some complication. My noble Friend has alluded to Lord Carnarvon's speech a few years ago; but the late Government took no steps themselves in the matter, and the noble Earl himself most sensibly and judiciously refrained from giving any express opinion of his own as to any particular form of State-aided emigration. The noble Earl is quite right in stating that the matter was under the notice of the Colonial Office. Very lately I have had a great number of schemes submitted to me, especially the one alluded to by the noble Lord from the National Association for Promoting Colonial State-aided Emigration. The Government at once thought it their duty to give their careful consideration to the proposal made with such authority. We, therefore, communicated at once with the Local Government Board on the matter, and they are now carefully considering the subject. We were bound also to communicate with the Treasury on the subject, and with the aid of the Local Government Board we framed a set of questions which we have addressed to the Representatives of the Colonies in this country, in order that they may give us information that may be useful in our deliberations. With regard to what the noble Lord said as to the Papers, if he will be good enough to withdraw his present Motion I will take care at no distant period to obtain, by command of Her Majesty, Papers relating to the whole subject. With reference to one point on which the noble Lord laid great stress, and which he considered had a most practical bearing —namely, that we should give the country all the information he mentioned—I may say that we entirely adopt that view. That is the view favoured by our

Predecessors. When we first went into the question we thought it would be better for persons in this country that the machinery should be connected with the Local Government Board; but subsequently Mr. Chamberlain gave it as his opinion—in which view I concurred—that, looking to the advantages and disadvantages, it would be better to connect it with the Colonial Office. At this very moment there are Representatives of the Colonial Office and the Treasury meeting in order to settle the details of a pecuniary character which it is absolutely necessary should be settled before I can appoint anyone to take the situation. Practically, I am not taking too much upon myself to say that a very short time indeed will elapse before we shall be able to inform the noble Earl that the thing itself is done.

LORD NORTON said, he begged to express his satisfaction at what had fallen from the Colonial Secretary. They ought to treat the Colonies as extensions of this country. People were talking of allotments—of three acres and a cow—when there were 3,000,000 acres at their disposal across the sea. He could not help thinking that what was wanted was a little more concert with the Governments of the Colonies in order to facilitate the use of the enterprize which was ready for colonization. The boarding out of young homeless children in Canada—acclimatizing them as Colonists—should meet the double demand of the country wanting labourers, and the labourers wanting country.

THE EARL OF IDDESLEIGH: I wish to express my own great gratification at the manner in which the noble Earl opposite has met the question which has been raised by my noble Friend. The course which he is about to adopt is, in my opinion, a sound and prudent course. I only interpose for a few moments to say a word as to what has been brought under notice in connection with the inquiries of the Royal Commission on Depression of Trade. I am satisfied that there is a great deal to be done for the benefit of the country, not only by propagating information to the public, and especially to working men, with regard to the condition of particular Colonies, but in the way of generally improving the technical education given to our people in this country. We are very much behind some other nations in that respect. It is of the greatest importance that we should take measures not only to make known openings in the Colonies to working men, but also to make known to merchants and manufacturers the capabilities and the capacities of our Colonies and of foreign countries. Such information would enable our merchants and manufacturers to direct their energies in the best and most profitable way for the conduct of their business. I believe that a great deal is being done by Germany and other countries to give a better knowledge of what may be called commercial geography than is afforded in this country. The people should be taught where they should direct their efforts, what kind of efforts should be made, in what direction trade was capable of being improved, and what kind of industry was most likely to be successful. I hope that the inquiries we have heard of to be made by the Colonial Office in conjunction with other Departments will not be limited to the prospects of working men or emigrants going out of this country, but that they will lead to the furnishing of information likely to be useful, bringing before the manufacturers and people of this country the position and prospects of the Colonies themselves. I am sure a great deal is to be done in that way.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY said, that after what had fallen from the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies he should be glad to withdraw his Motion. He trusted that the noble Earl would lay all the Papers possible on the subject before Parliament. His great object had been gained, the Government having virtually promised to establish a Colonization Department at the Colonial Office.

EARL GRANVILLE: I do not know that that will be the name for it.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY: No; but it will be that virtually.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

POOR LAW—DEATH FROM OVER-FEEDING.—QUESTION.

VISCOUNT BARRINGTON said, he wished to ask the noble Lord representing the Local Government Board a Question of which he had given him private Notice. The following report, headed, "Death of a child from over-feeding," had recently appeared in the Press:—

> "At an inquest on the body of a child held at Totnes Workhouse the medical officer stated that the deceased had died from being over-fed, and he strongly condemned the system of giving infants solid food. The matron said unless the orders of the Local Government Board were to the contrary she was compelled, even if a child were born to-morrow, to allow it 3 oz. of bread each day. The Coroner remarked that a child so young could not digest the food, and the doctor said that he was utterly surprised at the Local Government Board's orders."

Experience showed him that the Local Government Board was incapable of giving so absurd an order; but he hoped that further inquiry would be made by that Department into this case.

LORD SUDELEY (for the Local Government Board): The general consolidated order issued by the Poor Law Commissioners provides that paupers shall be dieted with the food set forth in the dietary table prescribed for the use of the workhouse. But the dietary table at Totnes directs that children under two years of age shall be dieted at discretion. Moreover, the order provides that the medical officer shall be consulted by the matron as to the nature of the food of the infants, and makes it his duty to give all necessary instructions as to the diet or treatment of children. The Local Government Board will cause further inquiries to be made at Totnes into this special case.

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 2*nd April*, 1886.

MINUTES.] — NEW WRIT ISSUED — *For* the City of Norwich, *v.* Harry Bullard, esquire, whose Election hath been determined to be void.

SELECT COMMITTEE—Admiralty and War Office, *appointed.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday [27]; Infants [139]; Places of Worship Sites [136]; Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children) [157]; Parliamentary Franchise [124], *debate adjourned.*

Committee — Report — Prison Officers' Superannuation [154]; Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) [74].

Committee—Report—Third Reading—Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (No. 2) [147], and *passed.*

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS (IPSWICH).

MR. SPEAKER informed the House, that he had received from Mr. Justice Denman, and Sir Lewis Cave, knight, two of the Judges selected for the Trial of Election Petitions, a Certificate and Report relating to the Election for the Borough of Ipswich:—

> We, George Denman and Lewis Cave, being two of the Judges on the rota for the trial of Election Petitions, having presided at the trial of an Election Petition in which Packard and others were Petitioners and Henry Wyndham West and Jesse Collings were Respondents, against the return of the said Henry Wyndham West and Jesse Collings as Members for the Borough of Ipswich on the 25th day of November 1885, do hereby certify and report to the Speaker as follows:—
>
> 1stly. We hereby certify that, at the conclusion of the Trial of the said Petition, we determined that the said Henry Wyndham West and Jesse Collings were not duly elected, and that the elections of the said Henry Wyndham West and Jesse Collings respectively were void.
>
> 2ndly. We report that it has not been proved that any corrupt or illegal practice has been committed by or with the knowledge or consent of the said Henry Wyndham West or the said Jesse Collings at the said Election.
>
> 3rdly. We report that the said Henry Wyndham West and the said Jesse Collings were guilty by their Agents of corrupt practices at the said Election.
>
> 4thly. We report that the said Henry Wyndham West and the said Jesse Collings were guilty of illegal practices by their Agents at the said Election.
>
> 5thly. We report that the following persons have been proved at the said Trial to have been guilty of corrupt practices, namely:—
>
> James Stephen Garrard, of 8, Alan Road, Clerk;
> Arthur Emmanuel Baxter, of South Street, Colchester, Iron-tinner;
> John Stroulger, of Trinity Street, Fitter;
> William Abbott, of Abbott's Court, Fore Hamlet, Shoemaker;
> Robert Norton, of 45, Myrtle Road, Boilermaker;
> Isaac Dalby, of 4, Grey Friars Road, Licensed Victualler;
> Robert Bennett, of Her Majesty's Gaol, Ipswich, Labourer;
> George Suckling, of Chapel Court, Fore Hamlet, Labourer;
> Isaiah Bloomfield, of the Welcome Stranger Inn, Fore Hamlet, Licensed Victualler;
> Walter Double, of Stone Court, Fore Hamlet, Quay-lumper.

6thly. We report that the following persons have been proved at the said Trial to have been guilty of illegal practices, namely :—

The said Robert Norton;
Henry Norton, of 84, Myrtle Road, Boiler-maker;
William Green, of 24, Westgate Street, Shopkeeper;
Henry Gunn, of 9, Trinity Street, Fore Hamlet, Sawyer.

7thly. We report that there is no reason to believe that corrupt or illegal practices have extensively prevailed at the said Election.

8thly. We report that the following persons, who have been reported by us as having been guilty of corrupt or illegal practices, have been furnished by us with Certificates of Indemnity, namely: the said James Stephen Garrard, the said Arthur Emmanuel Baxter, the said Isaac Dalby, the said Henry Gunn, the said Henry Norton, the said William Green, the said Robert Bennett, the said George Suckling, the said Isaiah Bloomfield, and the said Walter Double.

9thly. We report that the following persons, who have been reported by us as having been guilty of corrupt or illegal practices, have not been furnished by us with Certificates of Indemnity, namely: the said John Stroulger, the said William Abbott, and the said Robert Norton.

As witness our hands, this 1st day of April 1886,
George Denman.
Lewis Cave.

And the said Certificate and Report were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

QUESTIONS.

——o——

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES (IRELAND) —SCARCITY OF FISH ON THE NORTHERN COAST.

Mr. MULHOLLAND (Londonderry, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Fishery Commissioners have received a Memorial signed by six magistrates, and other influential persons, begging them to make an inquiry, either at Moville or Portrush, into the causes of the diminution in the supply of fish off the North Coast of Ireland; and, if so, whether it is their intention to accede to the request?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Yes, Sir. It is the intention of the Inspectors of Fisheries to hold the inquiry asked for.

BURIALS—ALLEGED SCANDAL AT TARPORLEY.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he has seen a statement in *The Daily News* of 27th March to the effect that, at the burial of the daughter of a Wesleyan Minister at Tarporley, Cheshire, the Reverend Canon Cooper, the Rector, vehemently protested against the performance of a service in the churchyard by a Wesleyan Minister, and that, the front gates of the churchyard being locked, the mourners had to

> "tramp through the mud of a dirty lane to a back gate, where they found awaiting them, instead of a bier used on such occasions, a rough, rude bench, which the bearers of the little coffin declined to use;"

and, whether he will inquire into the facts of the case; and, if they are found to be as stated, he will consider the propriety of instituting proceedings against the Rector for obstructing the burial?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): Yes, Sir, my attention has been called to the statement in question; but I am glad to say that I have since received a communication from the clergyman himself, in which he tells me that there is no truth whatever in the allegations made as to any undue interference on his part with the proper conduct of the burial; but, on the contrary, he has reason to believe that the Wesleyan minister was quite satisfied that everything was done as he desired. The front gates of the churchyard were not locked; as a matter of fact they have no locks. The gate that the procession passed through was the one selected by the father himself. The bier was the same as is always used by Church people and Nonconformists alike, and no complaint has ever been made about it. I am afraid it was not in the power of the clergyman to obviate the muddiness of a Cheshire lane in the early part of March. Under these circumstances, I can find no fault with the rector of Tarporley.

STATE OF IRELAND—RIOTOUS PARTY PROCEEDINGS AT CALEDON, CO. TYRONE.

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it a fact that on the night of March 27th, an Orange drumming party, celebrating a victory over a Protestant Nationalist candidate at the Poor Law elections, paraded the streets of Caledon, county Tyrone, playing party tunes, firing revolver shots, and shouting "To —— with the Pope and Popery!" and "No Surrender!" with a Poor Law Guardian named Naye, carrying a sword, at their head, and attacked, among others, the house of John Hughes, in which his wife and daughter were lying ill, and smashed the windows with stones; did they also attack the house of a very old woman named Sally M'Cann, and was her little grandchild, who was sitting near the window, struck with a stone on the head; did the Nationalists give any provocation to these outrages; is it true that the proceedings were witnessed by a sergeant and five policemen; did they make any attempt to interfere with the rioters; how many of the latter have been made amenable; and, did Lord Caledon, two days after the declaration of the poll at the South Tyrone election, withdraw his custom for horse-shoeing and blacksmith's work from John Hughes, on the ground that he had voted for the Nationalist candidate, and did he start an Orange blacksmith in opposition to him; if so, will any notice be taken of his conduct as a Deputy Lieutenant, and will any steps be taken to stimulate the activity of the police?

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) asked whether, on the evening of the 26th of March, Mr. Naye was not dragged from his own door and beaten by sticks; and whether, on a previous occasion, Lord Caledon's band was not fired upon—[*Cries of* "Notice!"]—and whether other bands had not also been attacked?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I think I shall require Notice of that Question. In reply to the hon. Member for Tyrone, I beg to say that as the Question appeared on the Paper only yesterday, and as the particulars received will necessitate further inquiries, I will ask the hon. Member to put the Question again on Monday next.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—ALLEGED ASSAULT UPON AN EMERGENCY MAN AT EDGEWORTHTOWN, CO. LONGFORD.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, By whose orders the police refused to afford protection to an agent of the Orange Emergency Committee, who attended a sale at Edgeworthtown, county Longford, on Friday the 19th of March; and why, under the very eyes of the constabulary, this agent was permitted to be assaulted, and exposed to serious danger, when bidding for cattle offered for sale on that occasion?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am informed that protection was afforded to this man by a force of 12 police. The only foundation for the statement that he was assaulted or exposed to danger was that his coat was smeared with mud unobserved by the police during the progress of the sale.

MR. JOHNSTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman say that adequate protection was given during the sale of cattle in the pound?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I cannot answer off-hand whether that was so; but I presume that it was so when such a force of police was employed.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—ARSON AT LONDONDERRY—CASE OF MARSHALL.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Wexford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in view of his statement that the authorities "believed all along that Marshall had employed M'Garrigle" to burn his (Marshall's) house, in Derry, on St. Patrick's Day 1885, How the authorities explain the fact that Marshall, though remaining in Derry for twelve months, was never arrested; how it was that he was allowed to leave the Country, while the lesser criminal, M'Garrigle, was brought to justice; what steps are being taken to bring Marshall to justice; and, whether it is a fact that Marshall was a prominent registration agent of the Orange party?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): There was no sufficient legal evidence to connect Marshall with the burning referred to; and, therefore, no steps could be taken to have him arrested at the time. The hon. Member will know that mere suspicion would not have justified the arrest of Marshall, who has so far evaded justice. I really am not able to say whether he is or is not connected with the Orange Society.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the suspicion attaching to Marshall was not sufficient to warrant the authorities in keeping an eye upon him?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I am not at all sure that the authorities did not keep an eye upon him. I rather think they did; but the evidence was not sufficient to warrant his arrest.

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): Why did they not apply the Crimes Act at the time?

[No reply.]

LOTTERY ACT—SALE OF SWEETMEATS TO CHILDREN.

Mr. THOMAS BLAKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the extensive sale among children of chocolates, and other sweetmeats, containing small coins; whether, since this practice is a species of gambling, it constitutes a violation of the provisions of the Lottery Act; and, whether he will take steps for preventing any infringement of the Law?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to this matter, and I have recently obtained legal opinion as to the legality of the practice. In result of that opinion papers relating to the practice have now been submitted for the consideration of the Treasury Solicitor.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—THE BANTRY UNION.

Captain M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to certain proceedings in connection with the election of guardians of the Bantry Union between the 18th and 22nd March; whether large crowds of men, headed by priests, paraded the country, visiting the houses of those who refused to support the National League candidate, and carried away and destroyed the voting papers of these people; whether the policeman, who was collecting the voting papers in the electoral division of Sheepshead on 20th March, was knocked down by the mob and the voting papers taken from him; whether Thomas Bride, in the electoral division of Seefin, while in the act of handing his employer's vote to the constable, was pounced on by two men, and the voting paper taken from him and destroyed; whether the house of Captain Somerville, of Durrus Court, in the same neighbourhood, was forcibly entered by a body of strange men, who demanded from his servants his voting paper, which they in terror gave up; whether the house of Timothy Sullivan, Gurtnakilla, Seefin, was surrounded by a gang of men on the night of the 21st March, who forced his door and demanded his voting paper; on his refusal to give it up, a pistol was put to his head with a threat that his brains would be blown out, upon which he gave up his paper; whether the house of J. Dawly, of Gurtnakilla, Seefin, was visited at midnight on the 21st March by a body of men, who demanded his voting paper, and such was their violence, that Dawly was compelled to burn his voting paper; and, whether any arrests have been made?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It is not true that crowds of men headed by priests acted as alleged in the second paragraph of this Question. It is true that a policeman was knocked down by four men unknown and his voting papers were examined; but none of them were taken away. As regards Thomas Bride, the fact is as stated. Neither Bride nor the policeman knew the men who carried off the voting paper. No such occurrence as alleged took place in the case of Captain Somerville. Timothy Sullivan and Cornelius Dawly both state that their houses were visited as alleged; but there is reason to believe that their statement is not well founded, and they have both declined to swear information. No arrests have yet been made.

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM A COURT OF JUSTICE IN GLASGOW.

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Lord Advocate, If his attention has been called to the alleged refusal of a magistrate and other officials to admit one of Her Majesty's lieges, named Alexander Robertson, as one of the public, to a court of justice in the county of Lanark; and, if he will state the law on the subject, and the redress to be obtained if the alleged refusal is illegal?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I have to say that I have inquired into this matter, and have ascertained that during the sitting of the Circuit Court of Justiciary at Glasgow in August last, a person, whose name has since been ascertained to be Alexander Robertson, was refused admission to one of the Courts by the authorities in charge, for the reason that it was overcrowded at the time. Subsequently, as soon as there was room, he obtained admission. The authorities seem to have acted quite properly in the circumstances, as the right of admission to the Court of Justice is necessarily subject to the condition that there is room.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—ADVANCE NOTES TO SEAMEN.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If he is aware that, under various devices, the Law relating to Advance Notes to Seamen is systematically evaded; that forms of illegal advance notes are almost universally issued by shipowners as the only means of procuring seamen for Foreign-going ships; if he can explain why, in the Merchant Shipping Bill brought in by the late President of the Local Government Board in 1884, it was proposed in Clause 96 to repeal the Law of 1881, which enacted the abolition of advance notes; and, whether the Government will take steps to render advance notes legal if found to be in the joint interest of shipowners and seamen?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): I am aware that under various devices the law as to advance notes is not unfrequently evaded; but on the whole the law has operated to the advantage of seamen, and has helped materially to check crimping. I am assured that the assumption in the hon. Member's Question that forms of illegal advance notes are almost universally issued by shipowners as the only means of procuring seamen for foreign-going ships is by no means correct. I understand that the provision in the draft Bill of 1884 was not intended as a bare repeal of the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1880 as regards advance notes, but was a proposal to allow such advances if restricted to one month's pay. The whole question is under the consideration of the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea, and any legislation on this subject must be deferred until the Commission has reported.

NAVY — ROYAL NAVAL ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS—THE CAPITATION GRANT.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether, while dealing with the capitation grant to the Volunteer Land Forces, the Government intend also to consider the desirability of any increase in the capitation grant of the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers; and, whether it is in contemplation to reorganize and enlarge this force, with a view to its assisting in the defence, by means of torpedoes as well as guns, of our large commercial ports and estuaries; and, if so, whether the Admiralty will call for Returns as to strength, efficiency, and cost of maintenance, of the existing batteries of Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, similar to those called for by the War Office from all regiments of the Volunteer Land Forces?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): The capitation grant has only lately been established for the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, and as it is not known what effect it will produce it seems premature to consider its increase. An additional brigade has lately been added for the Clyde, and the question of reorganizing and further increasing the Force will be considered in connection with the defence of the commercial ports.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING — LEGISLATION.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the President of the Board of Trade, When he hopes to be able to proceed with the Electric Light Amendment Bill in this House, which has been introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Houghton, on behalf of the Government?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside), in reply, said, that the Electric Light Bill of the Government had been introduced in "another place," and with two other Bills had been referred to a Select Committee of that House. It was impossible to say when the Bill would reach this House.

ADMIRALTY — THE DIRECTOR OF NAVAL CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether Mr. White, the Director of Naval Construction at the Admiralty, is still in the employ of, or retains any lucrative position in, the firm of Sir William Armstrong and Company; and, if so, whether he will be retained in the service of the Admiralty, considering the onerous duties of Constructor to Her Majesty's Navy; and, whether he will lay upon the Table of this House the terms and conditions of Mr. White's appointment to the post at the Admiralty he now holds, with the amount of the salary attached thereto?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that a telegram has this day been received from the Director of Naval Construction, who is on an official visit to the Dockyard at Devonport, to the effect that he is not in the employ and has no lucrative position in the firm of Messrs. Armstrong and Co. The salary attached to the present holder of the post of Director of Naval Construction is £2,000 a-year. I am unable to lay any official Papers upon the Table. There are, however, certain communications of a private nature which passed between the late First Lord and Messrs. Armstrong, which, perhaps, the noble Lord may not be unwilling to explain.

Mr. HOWELL said, he would put a further Question on the subject.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): As I was mainly responsible for the appointment of Mr. White, and as I am the only person cognizant of all the facts of the case, perhaps I may be allowed to supplement the answer of the Secretary to the Admiralty. When Sir Nathaniel Barnaby resigned his office last year on the ground of ill-health I had to carefully consider who was the most competent designer to succeed him; and, in the opinion of all those in whom I had confidence, Mr. White was unanimously recommended to me as being the most capable person for the post. He had a varied and almost unique experience. He was for 17 years at the Admiralty in the Constructor's Department, where he obtained a very high reputation, he had a thorough knowledge of the whole details of the administration of the Dockyards, and for the last two and a-half years he had been manager of a portion of the war-ship building yard of Sir William Armstrong & Co., and his success in that position had added to the reputation of the firm. But there were two obstacles to obtaining his services—first, that Mr. White was in receipt of a salary far in excess of anything the Admiralty could give; and, secondly, he was under an engagement to continue for some years longer in the employ of Messrs. Armstrong, and it was improbable that the Directors would give up their claim to his services. I entered into negotiations with Mr. White and the Directors, and was met in the most straightforward and generous spirit. Mr. White agreed to give up his lucrative post and accept a lesser salary in Government employ; the Directors, while admitting the difficulty and embarrassment which the loss of Mr. White might entail on them, felt the force of the appeal made to them, and on patriotic grounds waived their legal right to his services. One stipulation they pressed, which seemed to be a perfectly fair and reasonable one, and to which I assented. It was that, inasmuch as Mr. White had designed several ships, some of which had been laid down and others were about to be laid down, if any questions arose in respect to the building they might consult with Mr. White. But Mr. White's connection with the firm was actually to cease, and no services which he gave in that respect were in any degree to interfere with the discharge of his duties to the Admiralty, or to be inconsistent with the position he occupied under the Government. I see that the Question suggests that Mr. White's services should be dispensed with. I can only say that, high as was the estimate of Mr. White's capacity conveyed to me by those who previously knew him, it was in no sense exceeded by the personal view which I and the late Board of Admiralty took of him; and at this critical period of naval reconstruction I would add my belief that the loss of his services would be most detrimental to the interests both of the Navy and of the nation,

WALES—LAND LEGISLATION.

Sir JOHN JENKINS (Carmarthen, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government intend to bring in a Bill similar to "The Land Purchase (Ireland) Act, 1885," which will afford to the tenant farmers of Wales the same facilities for acquiring their holdings on fair terms which are now possessed by the Irish people; and, whether the Government propose to bring in a Bill similar to the Labourers (Ireland) Acts 1883 and 1885, which will enable Boards of Guardians in Wales to provide homes and plots of land for agricultural labourers, by means of loans granted by the Treasury at reasonable but low rates of interest?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): No intention has been formed by the Government for making either of the two proposals which are suggested.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—SIR EDWARD PORTER COWAN.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he is aware that Sir Edward Porter Cowan, who has just been appointed Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the county Antrim, is, as described in *The Belfast Morning News*, "a wholesale licensed trader;" if he will have, "at the next annual October Sessions, to get a certificate from the householders regarding the goodness of his character," in order to carry on the liquor traffic; and, if the First Lord of the Treasury will state on what grounds Sir E. P. Cowan was appointed to a position where he will have the recommendation in his hands of persons to deal with the granting of licences to sell intoxicating liquors in that county?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): The case stands thus:—Sir Edward Porter Cowan is a Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant for the county of Down, and also a Justice of the Peace for the county of Antrim and the borough of Belfast. He has considerable landed property in County Down and also in Antrim. In the commercial world he has been twice President of the Chamber of Commerce at Belfast. He is a leading member of various Shipping Companies, and he is Chairman of the Ulster Banking Company, with a subscribed capital of over £2,000,000. In fact, he occupies an eminent commercial position. He is also proprietor of the wholesale spirit firm of William Cowan and Co., and in that capacity, I believe, he would be obliged to obtain the certificate to which the Question refers. As a magistrate, he would be much more nearly connected with the business of licensing than as Lord Lieutenant. He has been appointed in consequence of the high estimation we entertain of his character and capacity, and I believe that his appointment has met with a large amount of public approval.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—MILITIA OFFICERS.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for War, If his attention has been called to an advertisement in *The Morning Post*, of March 27th, for a Majority in a Militia Battalion on behalf of an officer ten years in a Highland Regiment; if, in the public interest, as in that of the Auxiliary Forces, he will in future cause inquiry to be made of all officers, under fifty-five years of age, retiring from the Regular Army, or going upon half-pay, as to their willingness to continue to serve their country, and keep up their Military knowledge in either the Militia, the Yeomanry, or the Volunteers; and, if he will endeavour to facilitate the same by having their names, qualifications, and wishes registered at Head Quarters, and by communication on the subject with the Officers Commanding Reserve Regiments having vacancies for officers?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): It does not appear necessary to make the inquiry proposed by my hon. Friend, as all officers who retire on retired pay or gratuity are liable to be called on to serve up to the age of 45 for captains and 55 for field officers. As appointments to the Auxiliary Forces are made on the recommendation of the officers commanding corps through the general officers commanding districts, I do not see what advantages would be gained by keeping at headquarters the register he suggests.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

FOREIGN TRADE COMPETITION.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. M'LAREN (Stafford), in rising to call attention to the successful efforts of the German and other Foreign Governments in pushing the trade of their respective countries in Foreign markets, in competition with English manufacturers; and to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the Government ought to consider the desirability of appointing properly qualified Diplomatic Agents in all Foreign capitals or seats of Government, for the express purpose of promoting the extension of British commerce,"

said, this was a matter that deserved serious consideration, as it was a question whether we were doing all that we could do to preserve that commercial supremacy which this country had enjoyed for so long a period. It was said that competition was more favourable for the foreigner than for the English, on account of the cost of manufacture being so much less; but he had such faith in the genius of the English people that he believed if they had fair play, which was all he asked for, they would still command the markets of the world. As it was, they were met in every market by what he could not help calling unfair competition by foreigners, assisted by the Representatives of the countries to which they belonged. It was notorious that the Diplomatic and Cconsular Representatives of other nations left no stone unturned in their endeavours to aid the industries of their respective countries; but our Consuls did nothing of the kind for us. In the first place, they did not know much about our trades; and, in the second, they were precluded by the Rules of the Foreign Office from taking such steps in furtherance of our commerce as were taken by the Representatives of other lands. The trade that might be done by this country with Foreign Governments and Municipalities alone was very large; and therefore it was necessary to see that our chance of obtaining contracts of that sort was not taken away by what might be called official influence. If the existing state of things went on we should soon have a new "Continental system" raised up against us, which would be dangerous, if not fatal, to our trade. Occult German and other foreign influences were now at work all over the world for the purpose of diverting trade into their channels. France and Germany both took care that their foreign trade should be fostered as far as possible partly through their Consuls abroad and partly through their higher-placed officials. They did not hesitate to use the money of the taxpayer in backsheesh in order to smooth the way for contracts with firms of their own nation. In many places that sort of diplomatic pressure was easily put on, and Governments like those of China, Japan, or Servia were quite willing to pay a higher price to please the Minister of a particular nation. A great many instances of that kind of thing might have been seen in the newspapers during the last two or three months. The influences he had mentioned were at work all over the world, and the energy and ability of Prince Bismarck had even brought England within his toils. Instances had come under his observation of English consumers being induced by means of Consular influence to obtain their goods from German manufacturers. He also knew of an instance in which Prince Bismarck had actually written to a large importer in the United States to ask him if he could not see his way to purchase some of the goods he required in his trade from German firms. The same state of things existed in Eastern Europe, where the interests of German firms were being worked through the Consuls. He did not for a moment contend that the trade of this country ought to be carried on by means of our Consuls abroad; but he asked that some means should be taken by which, at all events, our own manufacturers might be placed in as good a position as those of other countries, and he did not think he was asking too much. The hon. Member then produced a large volume, one of four which, he said, had been sent from Germany to commercial clubs in every country. The publication was handsomely got up by a sort of Royal Commission appointed for the purpose, and contained nothing but advertisements of German manufacturers, printed in four languages — German, English, French, and Spanish. This mode of working the interests of German manufacturers had now become a regular system, and the House would see that if that book were to be found on every club table in commercial centres much trade might be diverted from this country. What could be simpler than for the Government of this country to encourage some such enterprize as that? From local inquiries which he made with respect to Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, he found that English trade with those countries was entirely falling off. Every week boats came in from Germany laden with every class of goods which we used to supply. Agricultural machinery and everything in the way of machinery came from Germany to Scandinavia. Then as to ships. Two or three years ago China required two iron-clads. At that time there was only one Chinese Foreign Minister in Europe—the Minister at Berlin. One of our largest shipbuilding firms applied to the Chinese Minister at Berlin to be allowed to tender. They were allowed to tender for one, but heard nothing more about it. They were not allowed to tender for the other at all. The building of the iron-clads went to Germany, procured, beyond the shadow of a doubt, for Germany by the Berlin Foreign Office. It was stated that China was very much dissatisfied with the German-built vessels. Not long since *The Times* Berlin Correspondent stated that two new belted cruisers were to be built for China by Germany; so that two new vessels which could be easily built on the Tyne, the Clyde, or the Mersey had gone to Germany without any English firm having had a chance of competing for them. It was the same with regard to Japan. Two or three years ago Austria was building three iron-clads. It was thought than an English firm would have the armour plating; but just as the contract was about to be signed they received an intimation that it would be supplied by a German house. In order to please the Sister Country of Germany the contract was snatched from English firms and given to an unknown competitor. Formerly we contracted for all the railways in Europe; but he had lately received a letter from a member of a leading firm of railway contractors, showing how a contract in one of the Eastern States of Europe had been lost. The moment it was known that an English firm was likely to obtain the contract, the Austrian Consul, who was in close relation with the *Union Générale,* and *Vienna Landerbank,* complained to our Foreign Office that their Representative on the spot was interfering with foreign trade. The Foreign Office instantly recalled him and sent him to an obscure German town, informing him that it was a most dangerous thing for the Representative of the English Foreign Office to interfere with foreign trade. The contract was given to the Austrian *protégé,* though it cost the country £1,500,000 more at the French price. He believed that it was entirely due to the efforts of his hon. Friend below him and to Lord Rosebery that the German Syndicate in China had fallen flat. It was quite true that our Consuls were called Superintendents of Trade; but they never superintended British trade except for the purpose of preventing British traders from cheating natives or foreigners. In 1872 Mr. James Howard, lately Member for Bedfordshire, brought the subject under the notice of the Foreign Office, and he was under the impression to this day that nothing had been done. In 1865, in consequence of the Report of a Select Committee on British Trade, a Commercial Department was established at the Foreign Office. In 1872 the Consular Reports began to be published. They were not satisfactory Reports. They contained a good deal of discursive information, but they were not Reports by commercial men, and never got into the hands of Members until 12 months after date, and they very seldom got further. He understood the American Consular Reports were not only very much better done, but in many cases were published monthly, and were very much to the point. England had only one Commercial Attaché for the whole of Europe—Mr. Crowe—and he wandered about from country to country, picking up what information he could. This was a state of things not creditable to a great commercial nation. There ought to be a Commercial and Agricultural Attaché at every important Legation in Europe and elsewhere, and they should be men thoroughly acquainted with our commercial affairs. This was a subject in which the country took very great interest, and there was no public body of any importance connected with trade that had not considered the question and passed resolutions similar to that which stood in his name. He hoped that the Foreign Office would consider this matter in a wise and liberal spirit, and that they would be prepared to expend a little money, if necessary, and at any rate a great deal of energy, for the purpose of securing the object which he had indicated. The Foreign Office received between £400,000 and £500,000 a-year; and he thought that a little out of that sum might be set apart to support some such organization as he had suggested. He begged to move the Resolution which stood in his name.

Mr. C. PALMER (Durham, Jarrow), in seconding the Resolution, said, he had been most deeply impressed with the importance of the subject from the information which he gathered while acting as a Member of the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade. The Commission had received evidence from the first merchants and manufacturers of this country; and it was most painful to hear the one story which was revealed in reference to the state of trade generally. Nothing could be more important and impressive than the Reports which, as they knew, had been sent to the Commission from our Embassies and Consuls abroad. These Reports had been obtained by the order of the Foreign Office; and he might compliment those gentlemen who represented this country abroad upon the fact that the Reports which they had sent were full of information of the most interesting and important character. It was true that, previous to the appointment of the Commission, Reports were made from time to time by the Embassies abroad; but he ventured to say that very few Members of that House went through them, because they did not enter into sufficient details connected with the trade and commerce of the various countries in which our Representatives were placed. The Reports which the Royal Commission now received were very specific, and entered into all matters connected with the industries abroad and with the working classes in foreign countries. He was quite satisfied that if the manufacturing and commercial interests of this country would only consider the Reports, and if the working classes would only study them, they would be able to learn what was being done abroad with reference to working hours, wages, and other matters connected with foreign industries; and they would not be surprised that the commercial prosperity of this country was not equal to that of other countries. With such knowledge before them, he was sure that the working classes would not continue to think that by receiving a sort of temporary relief in the midst of their distress this wave of adversity in our commercial interests was a periodical one. They would gather from the Reports that it arose in a great measure from actual loss of trade in this country—trade which was being taken up by foreign countries. Having perused the Reports to which he had been referring, he was satisfied that this country was suffering from depression of trade to a greater extent, perhaps, than any other country. It was said, in answer to the complaints made by British manufacturers, that other countries were suffering from as acute depression as ourselves. He ventured to say that, with the exception possibly of France, there was no other country at the present time—at all events as far as the Consular Reports went—which was suffering so much from depression of trade as our own.

Mr. MUNDELLA asked if Belgium was not suffering equally as much as ourselves?

Mr. C. PALMER said, his right hon. Friend remarked that Belgium was suffering from depression of trade; but he (Mr. C. Palmer) ventured to say that Belgium was not suffering from depression of trade in the way indicated—that was, in the sense in which the hon. Member wished it to be understood. What Belgium was suffering from was depression of profits owing to the general lowering of prices for all classes of manufactured goods; but the volume of trade in Belgium was as large as ever. But in this country not only had the profit of trade fallen off, but also the volume of trade was decreasing. Then they heard that Germany was also suffering from depression of trade. That country was undoubtedly suffering from agricultural depression; but in other respects it was far from suffering. Germany was one of the most prosperous and flourishing countries in Europe, and it was running England so close in regard to manufactures and commerce that he feared, unless we took a lesson from it in the assistance afforded to industry and commerce, we should certainly see ourselves behind it in the race. He did not say that we should utilize our Consuls abroad for commercial purposes; but we might assist our commercial interests abroad and make known what trades were being carried on and what changes were being made. We ought at least to assist the commercial interests of the country by collecting information from various countries and circulating it at home. The fact was that the state of trade in Europe was undergoing a very important change at this time. This arose from many circumstances. Among others, he might mention this—that there was now a more direct communication between the manufacturer and the consumer than there was formerly. Whether this change was brought about by the opening of the Suez Canal, by the piercing of the Alps, or by the purchase by Germany of the railways, whereby that country was enabled to develop its industry and carry its produce to distant parts at a low cost, he (Mr. C. Palmer) could not say; but it was certain that such change had taken place and was developing, and that the Germans were foremost amongst the nations of the world in pushing forward that new development. Germany gave all the assistance in the power of the State to assist the progress of her commerce. She did not hesitate to send her young men into every country in the world to study the language of the countries, and the habits of the people, their industrial and commercial wants; and when they had obtained all this information they put it into practical effect by distributing the manufactures of their country direct to the consumers, and displacing, as far as possible, middlemen. Not only Germany, however, but other countries in Europe were taking a great interest in commercial affairs, whilst our own country, which prided itself upon being the greatest commercial country in the world, did very little indeed to aid in the development of her commercial enterprize or of her manufacturing industries. That House occupied itself a good deal, and very properly so, in discussing and passing measures for the improvement of the condition of the working classes; but it was possible to over-legislate in this direction, and he thought if a Government would only put into their hands well-digested information as to the state of the labour market in other countries, the rates and wages of skilled and unskilled labour, the class of manufactures produced, and other information, which might easily be obtained, a great deal of good might be done to the working classes, who probably would begin to discern that something else was wanted to ensure success besides legislation. They would see that skilled energy and perseverance were necessary in the workman as well as in the capitalist, if we were to keep pace with the manufacturers of other countries. It was, he regretted to say, a fact that other countries, which used to be importers of our manufactures, were now not only competing with us in supplying the foreign market, but were actually sending their surplus manufactures into this country to compete with our own manufactures in the home market. The result of this was to destroy our own industry, and we naturally wanted to know why this was so. Well, he was afraid that one, at all events, of the causes was the little interest taken in our commerce, and the little help given to it by our Government, compared with the Governments of other countries, and he hoped that one outcome of this Resolution would be that the Government would take up this question in earnest in connection with the Foreign Office; or, still better, why should we not have a Minister of Commerce to undertake the direction of such matters? At all events, he hoped the Government would take the matter up, and that they would see that we had at our Embassies, not only Military and Naval Attachés, but also commercial men, of sufficient experience to enable them to gain information up to the latest possible date on everything passing in the countries to which they were appointed, in reference to commerce, the requirements of the people, the rate of wages, the demands for labour, the condition of the working classes, and on cognate subjects. He recommended hon. Members, too, to read the Reports which had been sent home by our Consults in foreign countries. They were very interesting reading; but they were also very startling in the information which they conveyed as to the manner in which our manufacturers were being supplanted by other countries, and especially by Germany. There was no question of more serious importance to us than our industrial condition. If we chose to pass over it lightly the numbers of our unemployed would continually increase, and we should find the distress intensified from year to year. Our trade would leave us, gradually but most assuredly, unless we could receive prompt information through the channels indicated, and unless when it was received it was promptly disseminated by the Government. No paltry saving should unduly limit the circulation of these Reports throughout the country for the information of manufacturers and all engaged in trade and industry. Nothing would bring working classes and capitalists together more quickly than the realization of the alarming fact that capital was leaving this country for the purpose of establishing large factories abroad. When once capitalists and workers saw that their interests were mutual in the matter there was every reason to believe that the great energy and activity of our merchants, and the intelligence undoubtedly possessed by our working classes and by Englishmen generally, would be united in a well-directed effort to maintain the commercial and industrial *status* of this country.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, the Government ought to consider the desirability of appointing properly qualified Diplomatic Agents in all Foreign capitals or seats of Government, for the express purpose of promoting the extension of British commerce,"—(*Mr. M'Laren*,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question"

Mr. HUTTON (Manchester, N.) said, that this important subject had been introduced in a very interesting and effective manner by the previous speakers. He was glad that the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. C. Palmer) had alluded to the circulation of the Reports which had been laid before the Commission on Trade, because they showed many of the causes of depression from which this country was suffering. For the last 10 years he had been making representations to Her Majesty's Government on this very subject, and more especially during the last two years, when, as President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, he had impressed upon the Foreign Office the necessity of taking more interest in the manufacturers and trade of this country. He had not a word to say against the great body of our Commercial Representatives in different parts of the world. We had an able body of men who were anxious to do their duty to the commercial interests of this country. He had frequently heard addresses delivered by Consuls and others before meetings of merchants in this country, and the speakers had laid before those meetings facts which were of immense value. It was, however, a ground of complaint that in a body so able there were many men who were so useless as regarded commerce. He could not support altogether the arguments of the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. M'Laren), who appeared to wish that our Consuls should become commercial touters. It would not be consistent with the dignity of this country for those gentlemen, many of whom were well educated in law and in diplomacy, to become commercial touters, as many of the German Consuls were. A book named by the hon. Member for Stafford was simply three volumes of advertisements which were issued by the German Government. That book reached him last year, and the volumes were on the shelves of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, where they would remain unused, because it was known that they were only advertisements. It ought to be stated plainly and clearly that what was required was a greater amount of earnestness and determination, not only on the part of our Consuls, but also on the part of those who were charged with the Administration of this country. It was to them we must look for more zeal, energy, and determination. We must not simply blame the Consuls who were trying to do their duty abroad, and who, when they sent home good Reports, met with little support and encouragement from the Government at home. Many of the Reports gave interesting and practical information connected with the commerce of the country to which the writer had been appointed; but there were very few which dealt with industrial interests; there were very few that told us what things were wanted abroad which could be supplied by the industry of England. It was in this respect that we wanted more information. There was an interesting Report from Consul Playfair at Algiers, who devoted 36 pages to a most interesting, romantic, archæological, and geographical account of Tunis, but only eight pages of any importance to the trade and industry in which Lancashire was concerned. It was on points like these that instructions might be given from headquarters at home. He might be wrong if he said that the Foreign Office did not instruct the Consuls as to looking after the commercial interests; but their importance was not sufficiently impressed upon them. Then many of these Reports dated back 18 months, and consequently gave no information as to what was now wanted. It seemed to take the Foreign Office a year to consider what Reports should be circulated. The Consuls waited until they could get complete statistics; whereas the Representatives of other countries sent home Reports yearly or periodically, giving information of what was going on at the time of writing, and not troubling themselves, as our Consuls did, with things which were matters of ancient history. Looking through the Reports lately published, he found there were several cases of Reports which had been delayed 18 months, and were practically a year old when they were sent off. In some cases three years were dealt with in one Report. The Consul at San Salvador sent home in 1885 a Report for 1883. The delay in the publication of the Reports was a great source of dissatisfaction. He hoped the Foreign Office would take a leaf out of the book of foreign countries. The Representatives of the United States sent home most valuable Reports of the trade and industry of the countries in which they lived, and these were of the greatest use to the manufacturers and traders in the United States. If this course was adopted by our Consuls it would be of great service to the commercial classes in this country. We also required periodical Reports of a practical character also with regard to our own Colonies, where it was even more important. He urged the Government to consider the enormous interests which were at stake, for unless some measures were taken before long to help the industries of this country they would see a continuation of the present depression, and trade would still further turn away from us.

Mr. GOSCHEN (Edinburgh, E.): I think the hon. Gentleman who has introduced this Motion has done a service to the House in bringing this very important matter before it. For a very important matter it is—important not only in its bearings upon commerce, though these are extremely serious, but important also as far as it bears upon the whole of our foreign policy—upon the traditions of the Foreign Office, and on the course of conduct which our Diplomatic Agents, the Representatives of this country in all parts of the world, ought to pursue. I will not follow the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow with regard to the present state of the depression of trade; but the whole House will be prepared to admit these two statements—the one, that the present state of our industry deserves the most careful attention of the Legislature; the other, that the competition of foreign countries has become extremely severe, and requires to be watched with the greatest anxiety on all sides. But it is extremely important that, in endeavouring to meet this competition of foreign countries, we should not be carried into a wrong direction, that we should not, in our desire to push the trade of the country, either at this moment or any other moment, embark on a course which might afterwards prove to be most dangerous, or embark upon a new system system totally contrary to the traditions of the diplomacy of this country in vying with the diplomacy of foreign countries. The words of the Motion are comparatively innocuous; but the preamble calls attention to the successful efforts of the German and other Foreign Governments in pushing the trade of their respective countries in competition with English manufacturers. The speech of the hon. Member who introduced the Motion with so much ability, dealt specifically with a large number of cases where the diplomatic pressure exercised by Foreign Governments had resulted to the detriment of this country; and the question which arose in my mind while the hon. Member was pursuing his argument was this—Does the hon. Member recommend that this country should enter into competition with the Governments of France, Germany, and others which he mentioned, in pushing special enterprizes, such as the sale of ships, or the promotion of railways, or the building of water-works, by bringing pressure to bear upon Foreign Governments, and by doing their utmost to secure concessions? That is a point which it is extremely important for this House to bear in mind. I entirely agree in the remark of the hon. Member who spoke last, that the fault, if fault there is, in not exercising this pressure, does not lie with our Ambassadors or Consuls abroad, but is due to the recognized policy of the Foreign Office, and that they are instructed to abstain from those intrigues and that competition for securing concessions in favour of individuals or firms which forms a great part of the occupation, and the favourite occupation, of foreign Diplomatists. All I can say, from the knowledge which I gained of this question when I was at Constantinople, is that there would be nothing which would give greater satisfaction to British Consuls abroad than that this House should pass a Resolution encouraging them to push trade. It would be a great increase to their occupations; but not only that, it would increase their interest. The hon. Member who introduced this Motion spoke of the pleasures of British Residents abroad, and one of the greatest pleasures of Consuls and Vice Consuls is to be able to trip up Consuls and Vice Consuls of other countries. We cannot, therefore, give them an occupation which will be more congenial to them than to cast aside all the past pedantry of the Foreign Office, and allow them to vie with German Diplomatic Agents both in pushing the wares of individual firms and in securing contracts to individual traders. Is that the wish of the House of Commons? Is it the wish that this course of diplomacy should be followed by our Diplomatists? There ought to be no obscurity upon the subject. I regret that the Resolution does not bring that point out sufficiently clear. It might be perfectly possible that this House would endorse, as I am sure it would endorse, the view that by all legitimate means the Foreign Office should increase the means of information of our merchants and managers, and that we should increase not only their knowledge, but also remove, if possible, impediments to trade generally in foreign countries. In that way they would promote the industries of this country. But, at the same time, I do not think it would be desirable that the House should express its view that our Representatives should imitate the examples which were sketched by the hon. Member behind me, and by which, under the auspices of Prince Bismarck, great results have certainly been achieved for German manufacturers. The House ought also to remember this, that there is a great responsibility involved in the recommendation of particular firms or particular interests. Hitherto it has been the desire of the Foreign Office—and that is why our Consuls are so careful—I think I may speak from my knowledge of the Foreign Office—to hold that it is impossible to discriminate between the claims of different British subjects; and that, therefore, either they must take up the interests of all or they could not promote the interest of any particular enterprize. I wish the House to draw a distinction between promoting British trade in its broad sense by such means as the improvement of foreign tariffs, or increasing our stock of information, and, on the other hand, pushing the trade of particular firms with the object of securing them particular contracts. There is a further point, and that is that the working out of special advantages for special firms or groups of firms afterwards frequently involves the Governments who have promoted such business in very awkward claims. The friction caused by these claims between respective Governments frequently damages the trade of the whole country quite as much as it has been served by the granting of an individual concession. I remember when I arrived at Constantinople there were 102 legal claims by British subjects connected with various industrial enterprizes which had been entered into in former years, and the pushing of these claims continually seemed to me to weaken the general influence of the Ambassador. Continual interviews with the Foreign Minister, to push the payment of the claims of a particular British subject, caused such irritation that on the following day, if the Foreign Minister had to be seen on some great question of policy, the result of the friction of the disagreeable interview of the previous day still remained. In former times I think there was more encouragement given to British traders in this respect. There were claims open at Constantinople of 22 years' standing and more, which had formed the constant subject of correspondence between successive Ambassadors and Foreign Ministers during those 22 years. Occasionally what happened was an understanding such as this—the Turkish Minister said, "This claim must be satisfied, and I will satisfy it." On one occasion a Turkish Minister granted to a claimant an assignment upon the revenues of some distant Turkish Province. The claimant thought he had at last some satisfaction; but two months afterwards he came with a longer face than ever to the British Embassy, stating that when his friends presented this assignment to the Provincial Treasury there were no assets—that the money had all been remitted to Constantinople. This is an illustration of the kind of difficulty which attaches to this class of business, and which creates considerable inconvenience. I do not think that the House will be disposed to assent to any part of the argument of the hon. Member which went in that direction. I would now come to another point, which is that of furnishing information and sending properly qualified persons to be attached to the Embassies. I entirely endorse what has fallen from one hon. Member who spoke of the great services of Mr. Crowe, who is a singularly able and indefatigable official. I think it is well worth the while of the Foreign Office to consider how they can further expand that system; but I think it is only justice to Foreign Consuls to say that there are amongst them some men who have considerable commercial experience; and I think, on the other hand, the House must also bear in mind that it is extremely difficult to find these properly qualified Diplomatic Agents who are to be generally acquainted with the trade of this country. Far from wishing to discourage the Foreign Office in the selection of such Agents, and in endeavouring to find them, I would encourage them to do so; but it is right that we should bear the difficulties in mind. Whenever you come to select these Commercial Agents you must take care not to select men who have been unsuccessful in their own business engagements, because I am sure if it were known to-morrow that the Foreign Office were prepared to engage the services of five or six Diplomatic Agents with commercial knowledge, a very large proportion of the applications for the post would come from gentlemen who had been unsuccessful in their own business. Why? Because, before the time of this great depression of trade, the profits of commercial men, on the whole, were greater than the salaries of our Diplomatists, and it would have been difficult to tempt away first-class men not acquainted with one particular industry, but most of the industries, from successful business, in order to send them to the centre of Asia Minor, or Japan, or China. Then there comes the difficulty of the language. These properly qualified Agents would be of no use unless acquainted with the language. So I think it would be well worth while for the Foreign Office to consider whether they cannot train men to this business who may not be ready in one, two, or three years, but who may be trained specially for the service with a view to an acquaintance with our industries, so far as they can make themselves acquainted with them, and at the same time acquire some knowledge of foreign languages, so that they may be useful abroad. In that way it is possible that considerable advantage may be reaped. But we cannot conceal from ourselves that this kind of universal knowledge which they are to obtain of the general industries of the country is very difficult. What would the great cotton industry say if, in a particular country, you were to appoint a man specially qualified to represent the iron industry, while their own was neglected? If you can find men of general ability, and qualify them by a special course of study, that might be a more effectual way than to select special commercial men, and take them away from their business. I know that as soon as these specially trained men enter the Public Service, there is, perhaps not unnaturally, a kind of prejudice against them on the part of the commercial classes, because it is considered to a degree which, I think, is scarcely justified, that the public servants of the State are tied up with red tape, and if you can only remove them and introduce the commercial element, that you would immediately make a great revolution. But those acquainted with these matters know that there are men who now devote themselves to these tasks with great ability; and I think I may appeal to hon. Members who sometimes look into these Commercial Reports whether they are not struck with the ability shown by men who have had no special commercial training at all, but who bring their intelligence to bear on these matters. In conclusion, I would say I entirely endorse what fell from my hon. Friend who spoke just now when he said great energy was necessary at headquarters in this respect. If there was a time when more or less it was true that the Foreign Office looked upon British merchants as rather troublesome people, who were continually causing vexation and annoyance at the Foreign Office, that has ceased to be the case now. Since the Commercial Department has been established at the Foreign Office, and since able men like Mr. Kennedy have been introduced there, I believe there is a great desire at the Foreign Office to promote—I would rather use the word promote than the word push—the interests of British trade. That desire exists, and nothing can be more true than this—that the more the young men in the Departments and in the Diplomatic Service understood they would be approved and rewarded at headquarters if they specially devoted themselves to matters of this kind, the more success is likely to be achieved, and the more it is felt generally at the Foreign Office that all Reports upon trade, and all legitimate efforts made to promote the general course of British commerce without entering into competition by putting on diplomatic pressure, the more I think it will be for the interests of the country. I trust, whatever view the House may take of the particular Motion, they will not encourage the idea that either Prince Bismarck, great man as he is, or any French, or Belgian, or Austrian Ministers ought to be the guides of this country or of our diplomacy abroad—our diplomacy which is looked to to promote British interests, but at the same time to hold as high as possible the standard of British honour.

LORD WILLIAM COMPTON (Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon) said, that, as a former Attaché, he agreed with hon. Members who had spoken in favour of the Resolution, and, in the case of a division, he should vote in support of it. Sitting, as he did, on the economical side of the House, he thought that the matter of expenses should be duly taken into consideration. Some hon. Members, doubtless, thought that the Consuls were the only gentlemen abroad who attended to commercial affairs, and that opinion appeared to be shared to some extent by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen); but he knew that they formed some portion of the duties at the Embassies. A system ought to be arranged by which properly-qualified commercial men — who understood the laws and language of the countries to which they would be accredited — might be appointed to the Diplomatic Service, while a permanent Secretary, trained and educated in the country, would be of great use to the Ambassador upon his arrival. When an Ambassador arrived at his post he perhaps found a body of new Secretaries, not one of whom could speak the language of the country to which he went; and probably he found a Consul who was the only person able to translate for him into the tongue of the people among whom he resided. If, however, he found on his arrival a permanent Secretary such as existed in Foreign Embassies under the designation of a *chancelier*—a man who knew intimately the language, manners, customs, and law of the country, and who had always been there—then the Ambassador or Minister would have at his right hand one who could advise him on all commercial matters. It would be inadvisable to hand over commercial duties entirely to the Consuls. If they had permanent Commercial Secretaries at the Embassies and Legations they might reduce the Diplomatic Service considerably. At the present time it was the First Secretary to the Embassy, and not the Consul, who compiled the Commercial Report; but when that gentleman was removed to a new post it was impossible that he could know much, if anything, of the affairs of that country. He believed that the Diplomatic Service did its best to assist our commerce abroad, although many of its members had no special training. The best solution, if economy was to be kept in mind, would, perhaps, be to reduce the *personnel* of the Diplomatic Service in order to have the Commercial

Secretaries to whom he had referred, and who would, of course, be under the guidance of the Ambassadors.

Mr. BAKER (Somerset, Frome) said, it had been remarked that hon. Members did not read the Reports presented on trade; but he must say that he had read most attentively the Report to which reference had been made in connection with Tunis, Algiers, and other countries. He noticed that a small slip printed with those Reports intimated that in future they would be forwarded only to those Members who specifically asked for them; so that it was not intended that they should be circulated to the House at large. Many of the Reports were, moreover, presented too late to be of real use. If the hon. Member who introduced the Motion went to a division he would be very happy to give him his vote in order to bring this question more properly before the Government.

Mr. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) said, he would venture to call the attention of the House to one, if not two, cases of recent years in which, owing to our deficiency at headquarters, we had not secured the trade which we should have secured. One case was at Cameroons, where, owing entirely to the activity and energy of Prince Bismarck, the trade of that important place was taken away from us. For three or four years the Kings in that neighbourhood had been writing to our Foreign Office begging us to take them under our protection. The Foreign Office gave no answer, or, if they did, at all events a very halting one. Then they went to Prince Bismarck who procured territory which was esteemed of considerable value. The result was, as he saw in a newspaper in December after the General Election, that in trade the City of Liverpool had suffered to the extent of something like £1,000,000 sterling a-year. That might be only a newspaper statement, and might be exaggerated; but still there was a loss which was entirely owing to a want of energy at headquarters. Then there was Zanzibar, the Sultan of which place had had his territory nibbled away, and this was all the result of lethargy at headquarters. We had let the time go by when we could maintain with success the position of the Sultan of Zanzibar. The trade of Africa and the great central places there through the activity of Prince Bismarck had gone to Germany. What was wanted was energy, pluck, courage, and resource at the Foreign Office, and, failing that, all the exertions of its subordinates abroad went for nought. He cordially supported the Motion of the hon. Gentleman opposite.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (Greenock) said, he hoped his hon. Friend would not think it necessary to divide the House after the testimony which he had obtained from both sides as to the immediate necessity of the Foreign Office taking some steps in order that the Consular Representatives of this country might show a greater interest in all matters connected with British trade in the midst of the terrible competition to which it was subjected. He was very much struck by the remarks of the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. C. Palmer) in reference to the Report already published by the Royal Commission on Trade. He was fully aware that the information contained in the first Report—which he thought was the only one yet published—ought to be of the greatest value to the working classes of this country in showing that if they were handicapped by foreigners they were handicapped simply from the fact that foreign working men were working longer hours and living at a lower rate of expenditure. Considering how much had been heard during the last six months, and especially during the time of the late General Election, with reference to the advantages which were to be derived from the investigations of that Royal Commission, he could not help feeling some disappointment that some achievement had not yet been brought to light by the labour of that Commission.

Mr. C. PALMER said, that the Report of the Depression of Trade Commission would be issued in a fortnight.

Mr. SUTHERLAND said, that the point to which he was directing attention was that they had heard a great deal on all sides, more especially during the recent General Election, as to the depression of trade being due to the fact that this country was following Free Trade instead of developing Fair Trade, and he thought if that were so the Royal Commission should duly enlighten them on the subject at the earliest possible moment. He was wishful, however, more particularly to take the opportunity of stating his own personal experience in connection with Consular matters, derived after a residence of some years at the Treaty Ports of China. He agreed almost entirely with the observations which had been made by the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. M'Laren) as to the absence of an adequate interest on the part of our Consular Representatives in that part of the world in the commercial interests of our country. But he must say also in this respect, that there were Consuls and Consuls, and if he were to quote the name of a man whose name was honoured in the East, and honoured wherever people were familiar with Eastern commerce—he meant the late Sir Harry Parkes—he would say that in him we had a bright example of a man who would uphold what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh called the honourable position of British commerce, and who, at the same time, would not, if he could possibly help it, allow any enterprize for a moment to be lost sight of or to be taken away through the influence of any foreign Consul to the disadvantage of the commerce of his own country. But he also agreed with what had been said by some of the speakers, that the fault did not lie so much with the individual Consuls as with the spirit which prevailed at the Foreign Office in regard to commercial affairs. He believed that a change for the better had been introduced there, but only, he thought, to some slight extent; and if he deemed it right to occupy the time of the House he could easily give examples in connection with his own experience to show that the Foreign Office did not take kindly to the exercise of those duties which were connected with commercial affairs, and that there was too great a proneness to take for granted matters which ought to be pushed forward with zeal and energy. He would give only one example of what he meant. Under our Treaty with China shipowners trading with that country paid to the Chinese Government a very large amount for port dues, and they naturally expected that the harbours of that country would be maintained in an efficient state. By far the most important place in China was the port of Shanghai, and for many years the merchants and shipowners of that part of that world had been agitating vigorously in order to obtain an improvement in the access to Shanghai; but so far from it having been improved, it has been constantly and disgracefully deteriorating to such an extent that vessels were now not able to cross the bar of the river, when drawing two feet less water than that with which they might have crossed it some 10 or 12 years ago. Great pressure had been brought to bear on the Foreign Office in this particular matter, and he was bound to say that the Foreign Office had carried their action up to a certain point in connection with it. They had carried it to this point, that the Chinese Government actually sent out a powerful dredger for the purpose of dredging the bar; but as soon as they got the dredger out there they took the opportunity of removing it, and the bar remained undredged to the present moment. That was a matter which had been brought under the notice of the Foreign Office over and over again; and if a proper amount of energy had been exhibited in that Department he was perfectly certain that, before now, our Minister would have succeeded in triumphing over the obstacles placed by the Chinese Government in the way of this improvement. It was perfectly well known that the Chinese Government and the Chinese people were of a character of this description—they were obstinate up to a certain point; but when they saw you were determined to succeed they invariably gave in. It was constantly remarked in the course of our wars with China that if ever we showed the slightest determination to take possession of one of their forts they philosophically observed that as we were determined to go in it was necessary that they should go out. That was exactly the position they held on every subject, and if the Foreign Office would prosecute this matter aright they would meet with the desired success.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) suggested that it would be of great advantage if an abstract of the Reports of our Consular Agents abroad were published at a cheap price, so that they might be more generally read. He could not see, however, having read a large number of these Reports, that British trade would be advantaged by our workmen labouring longer hours for lower wages. This would only increase the intensity of trade depression. In spite of his short hours and better wages, the output of the British working man compared, both with regard to amount and cost, more than favourably with that of the foreign workman. If our Diplomatic Agents abroad were to be instructed to use their influence on behalf of British trade, they should be instructed also to give more detailed information on industrial matters in their periodical Reports.

Mr. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's) said, he would support this Motion, because he thought something ought to be done to promote the extension of British commerce. It seemed to him to open the larger question whether the whole system of our trade and commerce did not, in some respects, require protection? And by the very terms of the Motion the House would be committed to the opinion that something in this direction should be done. He was glad to hear from hon. Members opposite the admission that our home industries were being injured and capital driven from this country by foreign competition; and it was hardly necessary, perhaps, to point out that the amount of our trade and commerce was of vital importance, not merely for the sake of capitalists, but for the sake of employment of working men. He understood the right hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) to say that the condition of our trade and commerce had not changed; but it seemed to him that as regards our relations with foreign countries, these conditions had entirely changed; improved means of communication and the advance of foreign protected industries had entirely altered the nature of foreign competition, and the time for some action in the direction suggested by this Motion had, he believed, now come. It was a question with him whether we were not living in a fool's paradise; whether we were not, by our apathy, allowing our home trade to leave us, and our foreign markets to be taken from us by our European and American rivals.

Mr. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham) said, it had been well observed by the late General Gordon that the British Empire had been built up not by its Governments but by its adventurers. If that was true of the British Empire, how much more true was it of British trade? It was the spirit of private enterprize, asking no help from the State, that gave us the volume of trade which in magnitude and value surpassed any other in the world. When we talked of foreign competition and the inquiries Germany, France, and Italy were pushing in every part of the world, we should remember how far behind us they had hitherto been and how much they had to learn from the British merchant. They were trying to encroach on a commercial monopoly which had belonged to this country for years, and which was entirely the fruit of the spirit of individual enterprize. It would be an evil day for this country, and would make a great change in the spirit in which business was carried on, if English manufacturers and merchants were to fall into the habit of coming to the House asking the Government of the country to interfere on their behalf. When Motions of this kind were brought forward it was right that those who represented great industrial constituencies in this House should ask what was really the cause of this great foreign competition in recent days. Had not merchants and manufacturers some grounds for searchings of the heart in this matter? Was it not the case that both capitalists and workmen had been spoilt by prosperity and had fallen into a too luxurious manner of living? During his stay in Bombay he had noticed how Greek and German firms outstripped in some cases their English rivals. What was the reason of this? It was that foreign merchants lived much more simply and in a more thrifty manner than their English rivals. A Greek merchant did not drive down to the cotton market with a phaeton and pair of horses. He walked down from his small bungalow, where he lived in a simple, thrifty manner, and was content with smaller profits than the high-minded, luxurious Englishman. So it was at home. It was said that it was Prince Bismarck who was taking away the foreign trade from this country. But were there not a number of enlightened travellers and merchants in Germany who explored distant markets and on their return induced their Government to support their enterprizes? Look at what the Germans were doing in Eastern Africa, where German pioneers, private individuals, had gone forth like the English merchants who were the greatness and glory of this country in years gone by. Upon the Western Coast of Africa the same course was being pursued by the French. This country had been carrying out a number of wars in the most distant countries of the world. But did they ever hear of Chambers of Commerce sending representatives to go with our armies to Abyssina, up the Nile, into Central Asia, or even to Burmah? In past times English merchants would have taken advantage of these Expeditions to push their business for themselves, and they would not have wanted any Government to tell them what were the requirements of foreign markets, or how to produce goods to suit the tastes of the people. He should like to point out, however, in what way the Government might fairly assist trade. It was often said that wars were of benefit to the commerce of this country. But was this the case? When Russia pushed forward and acquired new territory the first thing that she did was to establish a line of Custom-houses, with a view of thus shutting out English trade, and then formed railways for the transit of the produce of her people to the new territory. This was an example which England might well follow. We were far too magnanimous in our foreign policy. We had an increasing population, and were greatly in need of new markets; but when we acquired new territory like Burmah, at great cost to the taxpayers of India, and great cost of life to England and India, the Government never thought of imposing differential duties on foreign goods, but threw open to all nations the advantages we had so dearly purchased. We did nothing to prevent foreign competition in the new markets which we acquired, and foolishly abandoned the precautions which other countries always took for the safety of their own commercial interests. The result of that necessarily was that, while we did so much to open distant markets throughout the world, we gained no exclusive advantage from this extension of Empire; while Russia and other countries, by extending their Dominions abroad, did everything that they possibly could to stem our progress, and in this way deprived us of any advantage we might have gained by our enterprize.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.) said, the House was indebted to his hon. Friend for the very interesting debate which his Motion had produced. The subject was one which might properly engage the attention of the House at a time when so much was heard on all sides of commercial depression, and they were under an obligation to his hon. Friend for the great pains with which he had collected a number of instances in which it was supposed that foreign countries had profited to the disadvantage of the trade of this country. He did not think that his hon. Friend had made out any ground for complaining of the Foreign Office; and, indeed, his hon. Friend himself seemed to feel that such grounds did not exist; still the cases he had mentioned were not without interest, and deserved to be well weighed and carefully investigated. There had been for several years past constant complaints among the commercial classes as to the diminution in the volume of British trade when compared with that of some foreign countries. He did not believe that the facts were as bad as they were commonly represented to be; but if it could be shown that there was any action possible on the part of Her Majesty's Government which would in any way diminish the severity of foreign competition, and give British traders a better chance in the foreign markets than they had now, and if any complaints were to be made against the Government in connection with the promotion of British trade interests, it was, he thought, very desirable that they should be heard in the House of Commons. He must inform his hon. Friend, however, that it was not possible for him at the present moment to give a complete reply to his case by telling him the measures which the Foreign Office could adopt in order to meet his wishes, because they were at this moment in the very midst of an investigation of this question. The Foreign Office had only just received replies to the questions that had been addressed to the Chambers of Commerce, and it was receiving almost every day a number of valuable letters from Consuls, from private firms, and men of great commercial experience, which were throwing a great deal of light on this question. Within the very first week in which his noble

Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade had entered on the duties of their respective Offices, they met and exchanged ideas on this question, and a Minute was frame by the Secretary of State, addressed to the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office, requesting it to take this whole question into consideration, and to endeavour to frame a scheme by which the efficiency of the Foreign Office and of the Diplomatic and Consular Services might be increased, with a view to the better promotion of British trade abroad, and with a view particularly to the prompt collection and diffusion of information regarding the trade conditions of foreign countries, so as to make it available to British merchants and manufacturers at the earliest possible moment. That was one reason why the Government found it impossible to accept the Motion of his hon. Friend. It would interrupt them in the very midst of their investigation, and might have the effect of tying their hands by prescribing to them one particular way in which trade interests might be promoted; whereas they desired at the present to keep their minds perfectly open, so that they might receive suggestions from every quarter, and be able, after full consideration, to frame a scheme which would prove satisfactory to the House. Another reason why the Government could not accept the Motion was because in its terms it implied the creation of a large number of posts, and the incurring of a very large addiional expense, which the Government could not feel itself justified in recommending at the present stage of their investigation. He hoped that, under these circumstances, his hon. Friend would not think it necessary to press his Motion; but if he or any other hon. Member wished to obtain a record of the general feeling and sentiment of the House on the subject, the Government would have no objection to its being taken in the form of some such Resolution as the following:—

> "That the House hears with satisfaction that Her Majesty's Government are examining proposals for increasing the efficiency for commercial purposes of the Diplomatic and Consular Staff of the Foreign Office, and for promptly obtaining and distributing information on commercial subjects."

He did not himself suggest that any Resolution was needed; but in case it was desired to pass one to the effect he had stated, some such words would have the concurrence of the Government. He did not see that his hon. Friend had given any reason for thinking that our Consular Agents were at present deficient in zeal. His hon. Friend had referred to cases in which contracts which English firms desired to obtain had been obtained by foreigners. He had not shown, however, that the British Consuls had not interested themselves in these cases as far as they could properly do so. They might have taken action, although in vain, or they might have abstained from interference for fear of exposing their Government to a rebuff, or because success could only be achieved by means which the conscience of the country could not approve. His hon. Friend should not ask the House to proceed on the assumption that foreign countries did more in this matter than ourselves. No doubt, the competition of other nations was far more active in every direction than it was formerly, and it extended to parts of the world where it was previously almost unknown; but it was impossible that Britain could always keep a monopoly of trade in regions where she had once enjoyed it. His hon. Friend the Member for Oldham (Mr. Maclean), in what, in its earlier portions, he could not but consider an excellent and seasonable speech, had called attention to some of the causes which awakened this competition; and another hon. Member had truly remarked that the German merchant very often cut the British merchant out because he lived more frugally, was willing to do business upon a smaller margin of profit, and applied himself perhaps with less enterprize but with an untiring industry to his business. Then, mercantile education in Germany had reached a much higher point than it had in this country, which accounted in no small degree for the success of German merchants. This transfer of trade to the hands of German firms was by no means confined to the case of Germans who were German subjects and domiciled in Germany, but it applied just as much to Germans who were domiciled in England and British subjects. He therefore attributed the advances that German trade had made to the attainments and character of the German merchants rather than to any political action on the part of their country. In the United States the same complaints were heard which we heard in this country, that foreign trade was languishing and was not sufficiently pushed by the Government; and the depression felt in England was not in any way exceptional, for there was depression everywhere. The recurrence, however, of that spirit of self-help which was the spirit that had made English commerce great in the past would make it always great, and would expand the limits of our commerce as long as it flourished. It was another question whether our Diplomatic and Consular Agents were deficient in zeal or capacity. Having wandered about the world a good deal as a private traveller, he could recollect very few instances in which he had not found the British Representative to be an active and capable man, with a good knowledge of the country where he lived and a readiness to place his knowledge at the service of the British visitor. He did not believe that any European State possessed a more active or zealous body of officials than those who served Her Majesty abroad as Consuls. He did not admit that there existed any longer a desire on the part of anyone connected with the Foreign Office to "snub" commerce. If there were any traces of it yet lingering among our Diplomatists, such traces were fast disappearing; and it was now acknowledged within the Foreign Office that one of its clearest duties was to promote the interests of British commerce to the best of its power by all legitimate means. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) had shown with great force how dangerous it would be if the Foreign Office were to encourage Her Majesty's Representatives to give ground for foreign complaints and jealousies by endeavouring to press and push English commerce in a grasping and exclusive spirit. We should have to be prepared for troublous times in our foreign relations were we to embark on such a policy. Quarrels would spring up in every direction, because there was no part of the world where the assistance of the British Agency would not be invoked, and the exercise of British influence to the prejudice of the citizens of other European States would increase the jealousy which our own pre-eminent position had already aroused, and might involve us in such constant difficulties as would necessitate an increase in our Military and Naval Establishments. There was another point even more important—namely, the necessity of maintaining the high character hitherto borne by Her Majesty's Representatives. Lucrative contracts and concessions could seldom be procured, especially in Eastern countries and in some parts of South America, without resort to doubtful means; and the House would hardly wish that Her Majesty's Representatives should be asked to connive at such measures. Let them suppose a case in which competition became very keen, and a bribe of £2,000 was offered by a foreigner to a Mandarin or any other official in order to obtain the desired prize, and then a British merchant or financier came to our Consul and informed him that they could get the concession by offering £3,000. Was the British Agent to connive at such dealings? What would this House say if the matter was brought before it, and a Representative of Her Majesty accused of having been a party? He must remind the House that the attempt to push commerce in the sense which some words that had been used in this debate seemed to suggest would almost certainly lead to transactions of that kind. Nothing had been of greater service to the trade of Britain as well as to her public character than the belief in the integrity of British Representatives and the knowledge that they were above suspicion. He had heard with pleasure many valuable suggestions made by hon. Members upon various branches of the question. These suggestions Her Majesty's Government were prepared to weigh with full care and attention. With regard to the diffusion of information and the alleged delay in the publication of Reports, the fault did not entirely lie with the Foreign Office, but partly with the printers, who during the Session were very much pressed by other work. Remonstrances had, however, been made, and they had received assurances that there would be more expedition in the future. One reason of the delay which sometimes occurred was the Rule that all Reports must first be laid on the Table of the House. A Report received in the middle of August might thus have to remain undisturbed till the middle of February before it could be presented. But if the House were willing to do away with this Rule a great deal of time could be saved. Consuls were also obliged to wait for the publication of statistics, which in many instances came out very slowly. Sometimes they were not published for eight or ten months after the end of the year to which they referred. With regard to the criticisms which had been passed upon Consul General Playfair, the Report of that gentleman was a good deal longer than he was required by the Regulations to make it, and the valuable Report on Tunis which formed part of it was entirely a work of supererogation. The Report was one of great interest; and he thought that the House would agree in thinking that Consul General Playfair had exercised a wise discretion in extending his Report to include other than purely commercial matters. Without adopting many of the views which had been put forward in that debate, he sympathized with the general feelings which had pervaded the speeches upon the question. As to the question of what line their action ought to take, he thought that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh had spoken wisely when he had said that the two principal points required were, in the first place, that some care should be shown in selecting Consular Agents with a view to their commercial qualifications, and, in the second place, that they should have better plans for obtaining and publishing information. In these two ways the Government hoped to be able to do something to satisfy the wishes expressed on behalf of the mercantile community. They believed that it was possible to reward Diplomatic Agents who showed knowledge and skill in commercial affairs by singling them out for promotion and showing in various ways the satisfaction of the Foreign Office with their conduct. They were prepared to do everything that had been suggested towards spurring the zeal of our Representatives in obtaining information of solid commercial value. It had occurred to his mind that, instead of selecting special Commercial Attachés, it would not be a bad plan to use a somewhat wider discretion than at present in sending upon special missions members of the Foreign Office or of the Diplomatic or Consular Services who had shown a knowledge of and capacity for dealing with commercial questions. He also thought that it deserved to be considered whether they should not invite Her Majesty's Representatives abroad to tell them from time to time if there was any question regarding commerce or industry which required an immediate Report, so that a special Agent might be sent to inquire and to prepare it. Chambers of Commerce might also make similar suggestions, and the Government would be glad to pick out the most competent official to send over to the place where he was wanted. If time permitted, he thought he could convince the House that the United States alone, with the infinite variety of experiments that were being tried there in industry and in social organization, were sufficient to employ the whole time of a roving Commissioner; and that such Reports as an active and open-minded man could make on various matters would be most valuable to this country. He could also show what was done in Germany by the publication of *The Handels-Archive*, a species of commercial journal, which contained information of great value. In France and Austria they had similar official journals, which in a similar way gave the latest information on current questions of trade; and he saw no reason why something of the same kind should not be attempted in this country. He hoped the House would believe from what he had said that the Foreign Office was now fully sensible of the importance of this question, and might be trusted to attend to it. They were well aware that commerce was the life-blood of Britain. Now that agriculture was suffering from causes beyond our own control, commerce had become more important than ever, and success in commerce could only be maintained, in the face of the fierce competition of to-day, by turning to account every resource which the country possessed. The Government believed that it might help commerce, if not to so great an extent as despondent merchants believed, yet still to some extent. He fully recognized that the altered conditions of the world had made the swift transmission of information with respect to the changing conditions of every market, the growing or declining industries of every community, the movements of trade from every great port, more necessary than before, because there were now few parts of the world that were not in touch with every other part through the telegraph — none whose circumstances might not, so frequent and easy had communication become, affect the commerce and the industries of Britain. The Government believed that the country wished them to try whether more might not be done than had yet been done to make the strong and widespread machinery of the Diplomatic and Consular Services helpful to British commerce, and so believing they would try promptly and try heartily.

MR. BOURKE (Lynn Regis) said, with respect to the means of improving our trade foreshadowed by the Resolution, he differed almost altogether from the hon. Gentleman who moved it; but he thought that that part of his speech had been so conclusively dealt with by the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) it was not necessary for him to say more than a few words. He could not imagine anything more inconvenient and derogatory to the character of the Diplomatic Service than that our Consuls and Diplomatists abroad should be turned into commercial agents. Nothing could be more disagreeable than for a Consul or Diplomatist to find himself one day interviewed by five or six British merchants, all of them anxious to get his assistance to push their particular trade with foreign Governments. That would be a thing impossible for any Consul or Diplomatist to do, and complaints would be made in that House against any Consul or Diplomatist who should attempt to push the trade of one commercial gentleman against that of another. But, at the same time, he was far from saying that diplomacy ought to stand idle when our Diplomatists found that those of other Powers were doing their best to push British trade out of the foreign markets. If unfair competition were resorted to by foreign Diplomatists abroad we ought not to permit it. When he was at the Foreign Office he acted on the principle himself. The hon. Gentleman who brought forward the subject had referred to the action of Lord Rosebery, and the hon. Gentleman opposite had said that it was in consequence of their interference that British merchants in China had received justice. He was much obliged to the hon. Gentleman for mentioning that case, because the despatch was written by himself in consequence of some representation which had been received from our merchants at home, and which induced the Foreign Office to consider it absolutely necessary to make representations at Pekin. Now, with respect to the changes which had been suggested as to what were called commercial Consuls, he thought hon. Gentlemen had been a little inconsistent; because hardly one speaker had risen without bearing testimony in very complimentary terms to the value of the Reports of our Consular Agents. The hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. C. Palmer) said that he was quite sure if the commercial classes read these Reports they would receive much information. An hon. Gentleman opposite made some very sensible remarks, showing that he appreciated the full value of the Reports, when he said it would be a good thing if a condensation of them should be made by some Department of the Government. That was a recommendation which the Foreign Office might well take into its consideration. The thing might be done with very little trouble, and would be of great advantage. He could not agree with a remark which had been made by a noble Lord (Lord William Compton), whom he heard speaking for the first time with so much promise that evening. The noble Lord seemed to think that though these Reports were extremely valuable they were sometimes prepared by persons who knew nothing whatever of trade. His own experience did not confirm that. If any such thing were done it was the fault of the Ambassador or Minister abroad whose duty it was to choose competent persons, and that was being done at present, as the hon. Member for Jarrow had stated. He took great interest in the question, as the Circular written to the Consuls was signed by himself. As to the Amendment suggested by the Under Secretary, he did not see much objection to it, except that it seemed to take credit to the present Government for instituting a new era; whereas there was nothing that had been indicated by the Under Secretary which had not been foreshadowed by the late Government, and on which they had not taken action. But he hoped that the Motion would be withdrawn, and that they would hear nothing more about the Amendment which had been suggested by the Under Secretary. He had no notion that our Consuls should be turned into commercial travellers; but, at the same time, he thought much was due by the Government at home to the traders of this country. There was one subject which he hoped the House would not think him presumptuous in mentioning. He had been informed by persons in trade among his own constituents, and persons in trade whom he met abroad, that there was a very great difference in education between our commercial travellers abroad and the commercial travellers of foreign nations. A great deal of information which commercial persons sought from the Foreign Office they could obtain from their own commercial travellers if those travellers were competent men. He knew that our foreign commercial travellers were totally ignorant of the language of the country, and totally unable to make themselves thoroughly understood by the persons with whom they were anxious to embark in trade. He could not help thinking that in the Diplomatic Service there was a large number of persons perfectly competent to perform all the duties that might be put upon them. If there was any fault at all it laid at headquarters, with the Secretary of State and the Under Secretary. Persons in the Diplomatic Service performed their duties, comparatively speaking, at small salaries, because they looked forward to promotion; but if they appointed persons engaged in commerce to do the work mentioned by the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. M'Laren) they would have to be paid high salaries, and the Estimates would consequently have to be increased. He hoped the House would not for a moment countenance the appointment of any large number of persons engaged in commerce, because there was in the Diplomatic Service a large number of persons who could perform the duties referred to in this discussion. He hoped that the present system would be retained, and that it would be regulated from headquarters.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. Bourke

Original Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," again proposed.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—DEPRESSION OF TRADE AND INDUSTRIES—OUTDOOR RELIEF.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) said, he wished to address an appeal to the hon. Member for Newington (Mr. Isaacs), who had the next Motion on the Paper, which had reference to the relaxation of the Local Government Board's rule with regard to the granting of outdoor relief to the poor until the present depression of trade had disappeared. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, he said, had not yet been returned to the House on his re-election on taking Office, and, at the present moment, there was no Secretary to the Board. The Motion of the hon. Member was one relating to the administration of the Poor Law; and, under the circumstances, he hoped that it would be postponed.

MR. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth) said, he held that it would be very wrong on the part of a new Member to cause the Government any inconvenience or embarrassment; and he would accede to the request which the right hon. Gentleman had made that he should postpone his Motion. He desired to point out, however, that the Motion had been on the Order Book since January 13 last, and that it had been put on one side on more than one occasion in order to facilitate Government Business. It was owing to no fault of his or of the Opposition side of the House that there was no President of the Local Government Board in the House, nor a Parliamentary Secretary of the Department. Under the circumstances, he hoped the Government would afford him facilities for bringing the Motion forward on a future occasion.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian) said, he was sorry that circumstances had occurred to impede the hon. Member in submitting his Motion to the House. Owing to the nature of the Business which they had before them, it was not in his power at present to make any engagement with the hon. Member to afford him an opportunity, by giving him some portion of the time at the disposal of the Government, for bringing his Motion forward.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS REPEAL (No. 2.) BILL.—[BILL 147.]

(*Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. James Stuart, Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Burt, Mr. Henry Wilson.*)

COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

MR. W. H. SMITH (Strand, Westminster): Before this Bill is reported, I wish to ask whether the contribution which has been made under the authority of the Act which is now to be repealed will, notwithstanding the repeal of the Act, be continued to be paid, at all events for this year, to the hospitals of Devonport and Portsmouth? The Vote appears in the Army and Navy Estimates as a Vote under the Act to be repealed, and I think the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) will see that the matter admits of some inquiry. He will see that as when this Bill becomes law the Act will have disappeared, and the Vote has not been taken, it will have to be proposed independently of the Act that is repealed under the authority of this Bill.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): It is our intention this year to continue the sums which the right hon. Gentleman refers to. It is true they are inserted as payable under the Act which is about to be repealed, and that some alteration in the wording of the Vote will have to be made; but it is the intention of the Government to continue the payments.

Bill *reported,* without Amendment; read the third time, and *passed.*

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—[BILL 27.]

(*Sir Joseph Pease, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Isaac Wilson.*)

SECOND READING.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Addison,*)—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen) said, he thought before the House came to a decision on this very important question they were entitled, on the part of the promoters of the Bill, to a very great deal of information which had not yet been given. The Bill before the House, as was shown on a former occasion, was very incomplete, and open to very serious objection in detail; and the case in favour of the Bill was, in his opinion, not proved. He did not say that the spirit which dictated the proposal now before the House was not one with which he had very great sympathy. The object of the hon. Gentleman opposite, in his own view, was, undoubtedly, the cause of morality in this country; and he was very far from saying there were not many respects in which the law might be altered with advantage. But what he would venture to say was that they knew, in a very short period, there would be a measure dealing with the general question of local government in this country brought before the House which had been promised by the Leaders of the Conservative Party, and promised, he understood, by right hon. Gentlemen opposite; and they were also aware that the question of the Liquor Laws would be referred, in a very great measure, to the Local Bodies to be created by that Act. Under those circumstances, he thought they ought to look upon any proposal for dealing with Sunday Closing with very great caution. It was very much better that a question of this kind should be dealt with by Local Bodies rather than by such a Bill as was now before the House; because if they passed the Bill, and it appeared afterwards that upon experience it was not successful, in order to alter again the state of the law back to its present condition they would have to pass another Act of Parliament. If it were in the hands of the Local Bodies, and it were found that Sunday Closing was not successful in any particular district, the Local Body would be able to alter that state of things without the difficulty and well-nigh impossibility of passing another Act of Parliament. He thought that was a most powerful reason for avoiding, if possible, dealing with this question by an Act of Parliament. It was far better that it should be left to the Local Bodies who were to be created under the Local Government Bill. The hon. Member who introduced this Bill on the 10th of March dealt with it most inadequately, because half the House was composed of new Members who could not be supposed to know or understand very much about the subject. There was in his speech absolutely no information whatever. There was, however, a very great deal of information available. A Committee of the other House and a Royal Commission had reported upon the subject; and, therefore, the least the hon. Member could have done would have been, he should have thought, to give them the conclusions to which those Commissions had come. But, on the contrary, he did not believe the hon. Member mentioned the one or the other in the whole course of his speech; and hon. Members, in order to know the facts of the case, would be obliged to refer to those Reports themselves. He had had occasion to refer to the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords upon this subject; and he found this very remarkable fact, among other things—that the intoxication which was said to have been due to the opening of public-houses on Sunday was, in a large measure, due not to the opening of public-houses on Sunday, but to the opening of public-houses on Saturday. By that he meant to say that the cases which came before the magistrates were those which occurred before the public-houses opened on Sunday morning, so that the intoxication must have been due either to private drinking or to the drinking on Saturday night. Saturday was the great day for paying wages, and it was upon that day, therefore, that the most drinking took place. Argument, therefore, pointed not to a Sunday, but to a Saturday Closing Bill. These were reasons why he thought they should insist upon more information being given by the promoters of the Bill before they consented to the second reading. They had had experience to guide them in determining as to whether such a measure would be an advantage to the community, for Sunday Closing had been the law in parts of the United Kingdom already—in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. It was alleged—and he believed with perfect truth—that in Scotland the diminution in drunkenness had been no greater than the diminution in England, where there had been no Sunday Closing. So far as Ireland was concerned, there was a strong case against the Bill; and as regarded Wales, if they were to believe the reports, the case against Sunday Closing was absolutely crushing. It had been such a failure that in an enormous number of cases the people who favoured the passing of the Welsh Sunday Closing Act were now strongly opposed to it, and laid it down as beyond the reach of argument that, before anything could be done to remedy the state of affairs, it would be necessary entirely to repeal the Welsh Sunday Closing Act. In view of such very strong arguments as these against Sunday Closing they ought to look with great hesitation upon a proposal of this kind. He did not propose to discuss the details of the Bill at this stage; but he would like to say that he was very far from being altogether opposed to any change in the law in respect to Sunday Closing. He would, for his own part, be very glad to consider any proposal which was adequately supported by the facts, either in one direction or the other. It had been said—with some truth, perhaps—that it would be better to reduce the hours in London on Sunday from 11 o'clock to 10 o'clock. That might or might not be so; but the hon. Gentleman had given them no facts whatever to enable them to arrive at a conclusion on the subject. There was one very obvious criticism to be made upon the Bill. Why was such an enormous distinction to be made between the Metropolitan district and the country? He heard the hon. Member's speech, and had referred to it since; but he could find no adequate defence for the distinction. It appeared to him there was no reason why the Metropolis should be treated in regard to Sunday Closing so much more mildly than the other parts of England, unless it be that the people of London were very much opposed to Sunday Closing. That brought him to an argument which was used in the debate on the 10th of March both by the hon. Member opposite and by the Home

Secretary. They both spoke of the necessity of not going too fast, because they said total Sunday Closing was in advance of public opinion. Of course, that argument could only lie in the mouths of people who were in favour of total Sunday Closing. If they were not in favour of total Sunday Closing they would not pay any attention to public opinion on the subject. Supposing that were the case, they could only conclude that the hon. Member who introduced the Bill and the Home Secretary were really in favour of total Sunday Closing. Now, whatever view some of them on his side of the House might hold with respect to partial Sunday Closing, they were—he spoke for himself, but there were many who agreed with him—absolutely opposed to total Sunday Closing; and as they must judge a measure not merely by what it actually said, but by the intentions of those who introduced it, it made them look with still greater hesitation upon the Bill. He thought the strongest point which was made by those who were in favour of Sunday Closing was the point that the amount of labour which was thrown upon the *employés* in public-houses in the course of the week was so very much greater than that in many other trades that they should be protected from Sunday labour as well. He believed the hours during which young men and women were employed in public-house bars in the course of a week were very numerous indeed; and any proposal which tended to restrict the number of hours of labour for women in public-houses in the course of the week he would be willing to consider very favourably. But he did not see that, even supposing they were to restrict the number of hours in that respect, it would necessarily lead to Sunday Closing. Hon. Members on his side of the House looked at the matter with an unprejudiced view, and were willing to entertain any legislation which would really be of advantage to the community; but they were, on the whole, opposed to this Bill, partly on the merits of the case, and partly on the total inadequacy of the speeches with which it had been supported; and therefore if his hon. Friend went to a division on his Amendment he would certainly vote with him.

Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.) said, he was in the House during the late discussion on this Bill, and he had hoped that before the debate closed that evening they would have heard a little more of the intentions of the supporters of the Bill with regard to the partial closing of public-houses on Sundays in the country. For his own part, he did not at all feel disposed to give his vote against the Bill; but he was very glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that some alteration might be made in regard to the closing hours in the country. He would like to know what that alteration was to be? If it should be a fair one he would vote for it; but he objected to the entire closing of public-houses on Sunday.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) explained that the hours in the country during which public-houses would remain open on Sunday would be from half-past 12 to half-past 2, as at present, and from 7 o'clock until 9 o'clock, instead of from 6 o'clock until 10 o'clock, as at present.

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 101; Noes 41: Majority 60.—(Div. List, No. 59.)

INFANTS BILL.—[Bill 139.]

(*Mr. Attorney General, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Bryce.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Charles Russell) (Hackney, S.), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, explained that the matter had been originally introduced in the last Parliament by his hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and his (the Attorney General's) learned Colleague (Sir Horace Davey). A similar Bill had been passed, after considerable discussion, by the House of Lords, and it was now presented to the House in the form in which it left the Peers in the late Parliament. Stated shortly, the object of the Bill was to remove, in certain particulars at least, some of the remnants of the old rule, by which the wife and the mother were regarded as having no individuality and power of their own in regard to the custody of children, but that their individuality and power were merged in the husband.

The law at present did not give a widow the guardianship of her child, even if the father had not appointed a guardian, nor had she any right to appoint a guardian by will. The object of the Bill was to set that matter right by giving the mother a natural and proper voice in the guardianship and bringing up of her children.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

Mr. INCE (Islington, E.) said, he must congratulate the hon. and learned Gentleman on the great improvement shown in the treatment of this subject since it was originally brought before the House. When the idea first occurred to someone that it was desirable to legislate on the guardianship of infants, the intention seemed to have been effectuated, as far as he could gather from the first measure, by putting it in the hands of a committee of elderly bachelors and spinsters, who knew nothing about matrimony, and, if possible, less about children. In the first Bill there was to be a sort of duality of control on the part of a father and a mother, so that whenever a father corrected the child it could run to the mother, or when the correction was administered by the mother it could run to the father, with the object that the family should, as soon as possible, find itself in the nearest County Court. He did not think that this setting aside of the laws of nature was likely to be a success; and he was glad to see that the measure had been amended in this particular part. His hon. and learned Friend, however, seemed to be so enamoured of the dual system, that even now he could not give it up. It was extremely unfortunate that the law at present did not recognize the right of the mother; but, that being so, why did his hon. and learned Friend not make the law as he said it should be, and give to the mother who survived the father the sole right and control of the children? While he did not oppose the second reading of the Bill, he should venture in Committee to try to alter it a little more into consistency with what he believed to be the natural law affecting these important relations.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

The Attorney General

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present: House counted, and 40 Members being found present.

PLACES OF WORSHIP SITES BILL.

(*Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Borlase, Mr. Burt, Mr. McArthur, Mr. Henry Wilson.*)

[BILL 136.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe), in rising to move that the Bill be now read a second time, said, it was identical with the measure which was introduced last year by the present Under Secretary of State for the Home Department. Its object was to facilitate the acquisition of sites for places of religious worship. It contained every precaution necessary to prevent unreasonable or injurious proceedings. The principle underlying the measure was as follows:—There was one denomination in this country—namely, the Church of England—which possessed the power of compulsorily obtaining sites for places of worship, and the Bill proposed that the same power should be conferred upon other denominations. It was thought an injustice that those who did not conform to one particular mode of worship should not have the same facilities as the Church of England for obtaining sites. It was in order to promote perfect religious equality that the present Bill had been introduced. The hon. Member concluded by moving the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. J. E. Ellis.*)

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE (Cambridge University) said, it was his fate last year to oppose the Bill, and 12 months' further study of the subject did not incline him to regard the measure with greater favour. While wishing to give every credit to hon. Members who supported it, he must say that the Bill belonged to a class of legislation of which he had always had a great dread and dislike. It was legislation by invidiousness. It set forth with much pomp and circumstance what seemed to be a tremendous grievance, which, when looked at in its reality, shrank to very minute proportions. He did not believe the Bill would confer upon persons desirous to obtain sites for places of religious worship any real privileges which they might not be reasonably presumed to possess at present. If freedom of contract in regard to the acquisition of land were to be interfered with, he did not see why the principle should be limited to obtaining sites for places of religious worship, and not extended to the acquisition of sites for baths, washhouses, markets, and other objects tending to the moral, physical, and sanitary improvement of the population. ["Hear, hear!"] Of course, he was aware that, to a considerable extent, such facilities already existed; but that cheer showed the extent to which philanthropic Liberalism was inclined to go. The privilege possessed by the Church of England for compulsorily obtaining sites he should be willing to abandon, for he did not believe the Church had made much use of it. In conclusion, he moved, as an Amendment, that the Bill should be read a second time that day six months.

BARON DIMSDALE (Herts, Hitchin) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Beresford Hope.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) said that, in his opinion, the Mover of the Bill had made out no case, as he had failed to adduce a single case in which an owner was averse to selling his land for the purpose of the erection of a place of worship. Then, the Bill contained no definition of "religious denomination." Was it intended, for example, to include Positivists and the Salvation Army? The Church of England, so far from using the power she possessed, had been content with the sites given to her voluntarily. He was rather surprised that this Bill should emanate from hon. Members opposite, who boasted so much of their voluntary efforts, because the measure was a step in the direction of abolishing the voluntary principle and obtaining a *quasi*-establishment for Nonconformist Bodies. He did not object to the Bill passing, but he should like to see what Amendments would be proposed in Committee, and what the religious denominations were which were intended to be affected by it.

MR. THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.) said, that he had known cases where Nonconformists had had to walk a long way to a place of worship. He hoped the Bill would pass.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): said, that the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Addison) had admitted that the powers which the Bill would give to Nonconformists had long been enjoyed by the Church of England. He had ventured to make that statement not very long ago, and ever since he had been denounced by Bishops and Diocesan Chancellors. One Diocesan Chancellor had written to *The Times* denying the existence of any such Act of Parliament. He ought to have known better; but Diocesan Chancellors were often not learned in the law, especially the Ecclesiastical Law. The Chancellor was followed by a Bishop, who went to a Church Congress and stated that the Home Secretary had asserted that which was contrary to the fact, and various clergymen had held him up to execration for his ignorance of the law. The hon. and learned Gentleman said that what he was pleased to term an obscure statute—which was the principal Church Building Act—was not frequently put in force. Perhaps not, but there was an obvious reason. The chief landowner in a district was generally a Churchman, and there was, therefore, no difficulty in finding sites. But the case was different when the land was in the hands of a Churchman and the great majority of the people were Nonconformists. The hon. and learned Gentleman was perfectly right in reserving his decision till he saw what arrangements would be made. It was plain that the powers conferred by the Bill should not be put in force when there was no justification for it. But the general principle of the Bill was perfectly sound. It was only fair that if the Church of England was allowed to obtain sites where there was a difficulty in obtaining them, other Religious Bodies should be allowed to have the same privilege, and he hoped the House would support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) said, that it was perfectly reasonable that details of the Bill should be asked for, though, for the purpose of avoiding irritation, details had been avoided. But he knew parishes where land had been refused for chapels, and Lord Salisbury himself had refused to allow a chapel to be built on his property.

COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince) said, there were innumerable denominations in the country, and it could not be intended to recognize them all.

BARON DIMSDALE (Herts, Hitchin) said, he had the express authority of Lord Salisbury for denying that he had ever refused a site for a chapel. On the contrary, the noble Lord had expressed his readiness to allow a site to be taken for the purpose.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (DURHAM) BILL.—[BILL 74.]

(*Mr. Theodore Fry, Mr. Walter James, Mr. Dodds, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Gourley, Mr. Paulton.*)

COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Application of Licensing Acts).

MR. EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth): On this clause I have an Amendment to propose. I desire to insert words which will make the clause read—

> "In the county of Durham all premises in which intoxicating liquors are sold or exposed for retail or are supplied to any members of any club, society, or association shall be closed during the whole of Sunday."

Of course, in discussing this matter in Committee it is not open to us to discuss the policy of the Bill; but I think it will be agreed——

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the hon. and learned Member is under a mistake in this matter. His Amendment applies to Clause 1, and we have passed that clause. The words he proposes will not read here. The hon. and learned Member is moving on the wrong clause.

MR. EDWARD CLARKE: My Amendment is in Clause 1, line 12, to insert after "retail" the words "or are supplied to any members of any club, society, or association." I am on the right line; but by some mistake the Amendment is put down as coming under Clause 2. I submit, however, that I was entitled to be called upon until line 12 was passed.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid it is not possible now for the hon. and learned Member to move his Amendment. Clause 1 has been disposed of. It was called and agreed to without question. The Amendment stands against Clause 2. I am afraid the hon. and learned Member must reserve his proposal for the Report stage.

Clause *agreed to.*

Bill *reported,* without Amendment; to be read the third time upon *Monday* next.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (SALE TO CHILDREN) BILL.—[BILL 157.]

(*Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Theodore Fry, Mr Cossham, Mr. Valentine, Mr. Allison, Mr. O. V. Morgan, Mr. Channing.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, the foundation of the Bill was a resolution which was passed some time ago at a great meeting at Exeter Hall, at which the Bishop of London, Mr. Samuel Morley, and Mr. William Fowler were present. In justification of a Bill of that kind, he thought it worth while to call the attention of the House to the fact that, a Census being taken one Saturday evening in reference to 200 public-houses in South, West, North, and East London, for the purpose of ascertaining how many men, women, and children in a given time frequented public-houses, it was found that in about three hours no fewer than 7,019 children passed in and out of these public-houses. That might be accepted as a fair specimen of what went on in other parts of the Metropolis; and they asked how many children might be found visiting the 10,000 public-houses of the Metropolis, not only during the three hours of Saturday evening, but during 105 hours that public-houses were open during the course of the week? Statements by different authorities convinced them that they had in their midst a terrible evil, for they found that there were 250,000 boys and girls constantly becoming habituated to the surroundings of the public-house. Not only in London did this occur, but in Bristol they had the same startling state of things. There, from a Census taken in 1881, it was proved that during four hours no less than 1,200 children went into 900 public-houses. The provisions of the Bill which he had the honour to introduce were very simple. The operative clause simply prohibited every holder of a licence from selling or allowing any person to sell any description of intoxicating liquors to children under 13 years of age. With respect to that, some might think the age fixed too early; but if the opinion generally existed the provisions of the Bill could be easily altered in Committee. One reason for fixing the limit was briefly this. By Act of Parliament no child under 13 years of age could be employed full time at a factory or mine, every child under 13 years of age must attend school, and no child under 12 years of age could pledge things at pawnshops. Having these things in view, the promoters of the Bill considered they were not unreasonable in asking that children of such tender years should be protected from the permanent demoralizing influences of public-houses. Comment had been made, particularly by some newspapers, on the fact that Scotland was exempted from the Bill, and it was argued from that that there had been inconsistency. It was said that they had no objection to the people of Scotland becoming familiar with the taste of whisky, while they had an objection to English children becoming familiar with the taste of beer. The fact was that those who raised the objection were ignorant of the circumstances of the case. No licensed person in Scotland was permitted to sell intoxicating drinks to children under 14 years of age; so that the only inconsistency—if inconsistency there were—was that they wished to fix the age at a year younger than their friends over the Border. Then, again, they knew that under the provisions of the Licensing Act of 1872 no holder of a licence was permitted to sell spirits to be drunk on the premises to any young person under 16. Therefore he thought they might argue that they were simply asking the House to extend the principles which had already, in a limited degree, been applied in the existing law of the country. To touch upon what he conceived to be the principal objection which might be brought against that little Bill, he could conceive it possible that many would say—"Was it not hard that poor people, who had no servants to do their errands, should be prohibited from sending their children to fetch the pot of beer from the public-house?" The answer to that was that temporary inconvenience to men or women who liked to drink was not to be compared with the permanent moral injury done to young children in going to public-houses. If the working man coming from his work desired to have beer or spirits to drink for supper or dinner, he could not see that there would be great difficulty or inconvenience in his bringing it home or calling for it at the nearest public-house on his way. Another reason was that no serious inconvenience could be done, because publicans were always ready and willing to send beer and spirits by their potboys to those who might order it to be sent at any particular time. He did say, when they saw around them day after day all the terrible evils and crime and poverty resulting from intemperance, it was the duty of the House to do whatever was in its power to stamp out those evils; and if, as he believed, they might protect the lives and the moral character of the people by a small measure like the one he had submitted, he asked the House to extend a helping hand to defenceless children, and to assist them to become sober, honest, and industrious men and women, by passing the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) said, that although it was always a very serious matter to speak prejudicially of any measure to promote the cause of temperance, and especially the temperance of children, there were reasons which should induce the House to pause before passing this Bill. In the first place, the Bill had only been printed for a day or two, and while with a little more consideration he might be tempted to vote for it, he was not at present prepared to do so; because it was perfectly impossible that with the numerous subjects for which attention was claimed, he or any other Member could in a few days become fully conversant with the whole facts connected with each Bill. If the Bill was pressed he would vote against it. There was no proposal to deal with the parents who sent their children for the drink; but if the Bill was to be logical in its provisions the parents, as well as the publican, should be liable to a penalty. They had heard much complaint about the State freeing parents of their responsibility; but this Bill proposed to put the responsibility of the parent on the publican, who was to become the guardian of a child's morals. It was true that the Scotch had already got legislation on similar lines; and while he bowed to the Scotch Act as one reason in favour of the Bill, it did not follow that because an Act was in operation in Scotland its principles should be introduced into an English Act. He thought the House should hesitate on this important measure. It would be very hard for many a poor working woman if, when preparing her husband's dinner, she should be deprived of the assistance of her children, and be compelled to leave the house and run for the dinner beer. While he would be most willing to do everything to prevent children frequenting the public-houses during the night, he did not think that it would be wise to prohibit children entering the public-house at all for their parents' beer.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) said, he could assure the House that the question covered by the Bill had been very carefully and fully considered by a good many people for a good many months past. The London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children had had under their consideration for several months past a Bill, which he believed might be introduced into the House of Lords, dealing in one of its clauses with this question. He heartily welcomed the Bill. He was quite sure, from his experience of the best class of working men, that they would not fail to exhibit the greatest repugnance to sending their children into the public-house, and the greatest care in excluding them from the vice which the public-house subjected children to. In the United States a most stringent law had been carried into effect with this object, and had been most useful in checking the demoralization of children, and in removing a great many of the evils which they had so great reason to deplore.

MR. THEODORE FRY (Darlington), in supporting the Bill, observed that the only objection that could be raised to it was on the ground that some parents would experience some inconvenience by not being able to send their children for dinner or supper beer. On the other hand, the hon. Member (Mr. Conybeare) had said that great benefit would be derived, which would counteract and balance that objection. As the last speaker had said, the large majority of the better class of working people would rejoice at a Bill of this kind—at anything, in fact, which would shelter their children from the influences of the public-house, or from the familiarity occasioned by going there. Some years since a Census was taken of young children who entered public-houses late on Saturday nights in London, and there were found to be 3,000 or 4,000. He thought that everything that could possibly be done to keep young children from going to the public-houses and in furtherance of the work of the great Body of the Band of Hope, should be done by the House of Commons; and he trusted, therefore, that the House would give the Bill a second reading.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) said, the arguments of the hon. Member who had just spoken did not meet the case of this Bill, because he spoke of the children who in great numbers went into the public-house in London, and who were there treated to wine or liquor of some kind. Now, this would not be a case of selling intoxicating liquor to children, and therefore the Bill would not meet the case at all. His own opinion upon the Bill was that he thought it was one with which the House would not be much disposed to quarrel. It would be very proper indeed to prevent children of tender age from being allowed to obtain drink in the public-house; but he did not think it followed from that that parents should be altogether prohibited from sending children to the public-house for the beer they wanted for dinner or supper. But that was a matter which could be left very much to the Committee. The main question of the Bill was whether liquor should be sold to a child evidently for consumption in the public-house. He thought that, taking that as the main object of the Bill, they might read it a second time, and then in Committee the question whether a child should be allowed to take away beer for its parents to drink off the premises might be raised. He should vote for the second reading of the Bill, because he thought it was intended to refer to children drinking on the premises, which ought not to be allowed.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) said, he was very much of the same opinion as the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken. The question raised as to how far they should allow children to fetch beer for their parents was one of considerable importance, because that was not what they wanted to suppress. He should not oppose the second reading of the Bill; but he hoped the Secretary of State before the Committee stage would give his personal attention to the matter, in order that proper Amendments might be introduced with his authority with the object of limiting the object as described. There was only one word more he wished to say. If there was one thing in which those engaged in the trade desired more than another it was that an end should be put to this perpetually harassing legislation. He wished, therefore, very much that the Government would come forward and say what measure they meant to pass dealing with the whole question of the liquor traffic, instead of allowing an infinite variety of measures to be brought in on the subject, the only effect of which was to harass the liquor trade.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, that after what had passed between the Home Secretary and the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Assheton Cross) he should content himself by asking the House to listen very shortly to him. From his researches on this question it struck him, looking at this Bill, that a hardship might arise, especially from the way in which the present Bill was worded. He certainly sympathized very much with the views of the hon. Member (Mr. Conybeare) in bringing in this Bill, and in trying to check the evil; but in trying to check an evil they often found that "too fast made too loose." And unless some provision, such as had been suggested by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, was introduced the Bill might do a great deal more harm, perhaps, than good. In his researches on the Sunday Closing Bill he took a great deal of pains in looking at and ascertaining the habits of the people on Sunday afternoons as soon as the public-houses were opened, and for this purpose he watched the public-houses in the low districts surrounding that House. He found that there were a great number of well-dressed children who went into them for beer for their parents, and came out again within a few minutes. He did not understand that the hon. Member desired to stop that; but that what he wanted to stop was children being detained in public-houses, and being sold liquor for themselves to be consumed on the premises. Then there was another point. They were going to stop little children from going into public-houses under 13 years of age; but they must be careful in sending in girls who were rather over that age. He was afraid that girls over 13 might be subject to greater temptations. Those were points which he trusted the House would not fail to consider when the Bill got into Committee. He was afraid, as the Bill stood at present, it might possibly in these respects do a great deal of harm, when the hon. Member and his Friends were desirous that the principle they were advocating should do a good deal of good.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he wanted to make sure whether or not it was the intention of the Bill that young children should be prohibited from getting liquor for their parents. The Home Secretary said that was not the intention.

Mr. CHILDERS begged to correct the hon. Gentleman. What he said was that in Committee he should propose to amend the Bill, so as not to prohibit children fetching liquor for their parents.

Mr. BARTLEY said, that that point struck at the very principle of the Bill. If the measure was to be limited to prohibiting the supply to young children of liquor for themselves to drink on the premises, he would heartily support it. But if it was to prohibit children from fetching liquor for their parents, then he thought that with a philanthropic view the House would be inflicting a very great hardship. The remark of the hon. Baronet that it was more dangerous to send the elder children was one of great importance. He trusted that if the Bill was read a second time it would be on the distinct understanding that the Amendments indicated by the Home Secretary were made in Committee.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, they had an Act in Scotland prohibiting the sale of excisable liquor to children under 14 years, and it worked very well. But the prohibition had been held to apply only to the sale of liquor for the children's own consumption, and not to the sale of liquor for their parents. Some difficulty had been caused by the word "apparently," because it would be very hard if a publican were fined for supplying a child who was actually over 14, but looked apparently under the age; and he remembered a case which came before him on that point. The boy who was served was a very little fellow, and was apparently under 14; but the publican who served him knew that he was over 14; and he (Mr. Macdonald) decided that there could be no conviction—although he was not quite sure that in so doing he acted up to the letter of the law. There was at present an agitation among the Temperance Party in Scotland to get the Act amended, so as to make it apply to every case in which a child was served with liquor; but it appeared to him that the proper thing was to limit it to cases in which a publican allowed a child to remain on his premises for the purpose of drinking.

Mr. MAGNIAC (Bedford, N., Biggleswade) said, he hoped the House would think twice before passing this Bill. It seemed to him it would effect very great hardships in the agricultural districts. The labourers had large families, the wives were obliged to look after the children at home, and the fathers might be unable to fetch their supper beer. In such cases children were naturally sent for it, and he could not see any possible harm. As had been pointed out, these young children were not the ones who required protection so much as the older ones, who were more likely to want the drink for themselves. He thought that if the Bill were passed the House would be going much too far in interfering with the operations of the daily life of the people. If fathers and mothers could not be trusted to send their own children, and to control them, he said that no control of that House would bring up those children properly. He objected to this interference with the rights of parents, and he warned the House that if it proposed to undertake the management of all the children in the country such legislation must inevitably break down. He thought the Bill was a very ill-considered and crude measure. The hon. Member who brought it in had not much experience of the House, and therefore, with the best intentions in the world, his Bill bristled with difficulties. Everybody admitted that if it passed the second reading it must be entirely altered in Committee, and that was not the form in which a Bill ought to pass the second reading in that House. Measures ought to be well considered and able to stand on their own merits, and ought not to have to be altered in principle in Committee. If a Bill were brought in the principles of which were approved, then it was well and good to give it a second reading, and the details might be altered in Committee, but never the principles. He hoped the House would not give a second reading to the Bill, which he was confident would work ill in the country, and do great injustice to parents.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) supported the second reading of the Bill upon the understanding that the utmost circumspection would be used in examining its details when they got into Committee.

Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.) said, he wished to know whether the professed object of this Bill was not in conflict with its provisions? Its object was to prevent demoralization, and, with that view, to render it unlawful for a publican to supply a child, although only the messenger of its father or mother, with a pint of beer or anything else which the parents required to consume at home. Now, imagine the case of a wife and mother, with a sick husband whom she was bound to nurse at home, requiring to send one of her two children to the public-house to procure the usual jug of beer. One was an intelligent boy of 11 or 12 years, the other a girl of 17 or 18. Were they to be told that, if there was danger of demoralization, the danger was less for the grown young woman than for the child? Few people who reflected on the subject could doubt that the danger was greater for the grown young woman; but the House was asked to pass a law to overrule the parents' choice in such a case. He would vote against the Bill, however good the intentions of its promoters.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West) said, he thought that the Bill now before the House was an important one in its way. He must confess he had been very much surprised with what fell from the Secretary of State for the Home Department. The right hon. Gentleman knew as well as anybody the danger likely to result from ill-considered legislation. The Bill which it was intended should issue from the Committee was not the Bill that was now before the House. The Bill now before the House was explained by the hon. Member for Cornwall as a Bill to prevent children going to public-houses and purchasing beer for any purpose whatever. That was the position taken by the hon. Member for Cornwall, and it was only when he found that the Home Secretary was anxious that some relaxation should be made that he consented—if he did consent—to some alteration in Committee. Now, when such a Bill as this came before the House, it was necessary that it should be well considered and all its details understood. He (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) agreed with the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire that if the Bill were carried in its present form it would absolutely preclude children in rural districts going for beer to the public-house. When they considered what had been said by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway with regard to the franchise which had just been given, and, as he thought, rightly given, to the working classes of this country, they were now going, after continuing that privilege, to tell the same classes that they were not fit, and could not be trusted to look after the children. That he considered one of the most preposterous things that was ever brought before the House, for a parent who had the best interest in his children could not be trusted to look after them! That was the actual proposal of the Bill; it was a slur on the working classes. He quite agreed with the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire that the right hon. Gentleman would do well to consider the whole of this question. Every day they had questions cropping up with respect to the liquor traffic. Was it fair that so respectable an interest as that of the licensed victuallers should have no guide from the Government with regard to what they intended to do? The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that he should like to see piecemeal legislation in these cases, and that every county should have the privilege of deciding for itself such questions, at any rate as far as Sunday Closing was concerned. This was a view from which he (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) entirely dissented. What was good for one county was good for all. They ought to have from the Government an explicit statement of their views upon this question. It was unwise to hurry through the House of Commons a measure like this. He did not see what was going to be done with the Bill; all he could say was that if it came out of Committee with the Amendments of the Secretary of State for the Home Department it would not be the same Bill to which they were now asked to give a second reading. He, therefore, asked the House to pause before assenting to the second reading of this Bill, for they might depend upon it the Bill would disgust the working classes when they came to find out what it really was.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby) thought the hon. and gallant Member opposite had evinced some unnecessary indignation in regard to the proposal. The late Lord Advocate had said that that very law existed in Scotland, the words of the Scotch Act being very nearly identical with those of the present Bill, and being to the effect that excisable liquors were not to be supplied to girls and boys apparently under 14 years of age. Unless, therefore, the word "supply" differed in its legal interpretation from the word "sell" in the present Bill the two things were substantially identical; but the point could be made quite clear in Committee. He quite agreed, however, with those hon. Members who contended that children should not, especially in rural districts, be prevented from bringing beer from the licensed houses to their parents. The hon. and gallant Member had addressed an objurgation against his remark that each particular locality ought to have its own measure, and preferred that there should be one general law. For himself, however, he held that in those matters each locality should judge for itself, and that what suited one locality might not suit another. He did not expect the hon. and gallant Member to pay much attention to his remarks, or to accept his authority on a question of that kind; but he might, perhaps, pay some attention to the statement of the Marquess of Salisbury, who, he might remind the hon. and gallant Member, in his speech at Newport, laid down in the broadest manner the principle that in regard to Sunday Closing the localities were, under the Local Government Bill, to be allowed to judge and to form their own opinion. Therefore he hoped that the hon. and gallant Gentleman would divert some of his wrath to Lord Salisbury. Under these circumstances, and with the general agreement that the Bill should be limited to the matters stated, he would support the second reading.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) said, he regretted that he had not been present when that discussion began, because no one with any experience of their Friday nights' discussions would have imagined that Order of the Day No. 12 would be reached or come on for serious discussion in the House. He questioned whether any right hon. Gentleman opposite could mention an instance when such a thing had occurred before. He ventured to take exception to the attitude assumed on that subject as on others by the Government. The Government seemed to think that it was perfectly legitimate to support any Bill that might be moved from below the Gangway on their own side as long as they could bring themselves to say that they agreed to some extent with the principle of the measure. Well, but had that generally been the rule on which responsible Governments had accepted legislation? If they wanted the House to agree to an abstract principle the ordinary practice was to embody it in a Resolution; but he had never heard yet, until the present Government came into Office, that a responsible Administration would say that they agreed with the principle of the Bill, or would go even further and say that possibly to some extent they might agree with the principle of the Bill, and therefore they would support its second reading, although with the contents and with the machinery of the measure they entirely disagreed, and if it went into Committee they must try to alter everything that was in it. That, to some extent, was the position which the Government had taken up in this matter. It was very much the position they took up on another Bill on Wednesday—the Agricultural Allotments Bill. He ventured to think that that was an entirely new departure for the House of Commons or for a Government to take. If the Government accepted a Bill they accepted not only the principle of the Bill, but also the machinery by which that principle was to be carried out. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that if they altered this word or that word, and changed this word and substituted another word for some other word, and so on, in fact made very considerable alterations—[The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: No; only one word.]—it was possible to accept the Bill. It had been said, and the Scotch Judges had come to the conclusion, that the word "sell" had not the same meaning as the word "supply;" but it did not in any way follow that the English Judges would come to the same conclusion. He would point out that there was a great difference between Scotch habits and English habits in reference to the question of the supply of liquor. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] The House was exhibiting a little impatience about this matter; but why they should do so, considering the progress which had been made, he did not know. The national drink in Scotland was not the same as the national drink in England, and he ventured to doubt whether the practice of sending children to fetch liquor from the public-house at all obtained in Scotland. It would put the working classes of this country to great inconvenience if they were to be prevented from sending children to fetch the beer for the midday meal. By the Bill a publican who supplied intoxicating liquor to a child to be taken off the premises might be liable to a prosecution at the hands of some fanatic belonging to a temperance society. Did hon. Members who supported the Bill think that they were contributing to the social comfort of the working classes? He greatly doubted it. He should have thought the working classes in this country at the present day were rather hardly dealt with already, what with their low wages and legal restrictions at every step they took. He protested against the manner in which measure after measure was thrust through the House of Commons, all having for their object the cramping of individual liberty. Matters were fast coming to this—that they would be soon having it laid down exactly what the labouring classes were to do at each particular hour of the day. Was such a measure as this likely to be popular? Could hon. Members point out that there had been such a frightful amount of juvenile drunkenness as to warrant Parliament stepping in and passing such an Act as this? He imagined that what Parliament had to do was to deal with great social evils, and until they could prove the existence of great social evils Parliament should not interfere too hastily. This was a Bill about which very little had been known. It had happened to be alluded to in a leading article in a morning paper of that day; but he doubted whether any great proportion of the House of Commons had had any idea that the second reading of a Bill of this kind was to be moved, but up jumped the Government and said—"That, on the whole, they agreed, more or less, with the principle of the Bill, and that they would give it a second reading." Was that the principle on which the new House of Commons was to proceed? He would venture to press upon the House that there was a rashness, a recklessness of legislation going on at the present moment. For his own part he should certainly vote against the Bill, as he considered that no justification for it whatsoever had been put forward. The Government had acted most imprudently in accepting the second reading of a Bill which he did not think they had any intention of allowing to go any further; and he wished to enter a solemn protest against important and wide-reaching legislation of this kind being adopted without any sufficient grounds for interference having been shown to exist.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside) said, that the noble Lord who had just spoken had come down late in the evening, and had spoken evidently in ignorance of all the remarks which had been made concerning it. The noble Lord had declared his intention of opposing the second reading of the Bill, and charged the House of Commons with rashness, with recklessness, and he did not know what other strong language the noble Lord had used; and he had been particularly severe on the Government for consenting under any circumstances and with any Amendments to pass the second reading of the Bill. But did the noble Lord know that the right hon. Gentleman the late Home Secretary, who was sitting beside him, had been in favour of the Bill, and had suggested the very words to be introduced?

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS: I said that without those words it was absolutely impossible that such a Bill should be passed.

Mr. MUNDELLA remarked, that the right hon. Gentleman had said that he would support the second reading; and while the late Lord Advocate had given the illustration of Scotland, and had said that the Bill would do with a slight alteration, his own Colleague in the representation of Sheffield had also said that he would give the Bill, with the alterations indicated, his cordial support. Then down came the noble Lord, showing what unanimity existed on that Bench, and warned them of the rash and reckless character of the new House of Commons. The noble Lord had told them that what Parliament had to do with was great social evils, and that they should not mind the minor questions. That the way to deal with great social evils was to nip them in the bud—to take them at the outset, before they became great social evils. The noble Lord had spoken about altering every line of the Bill; but he thought that the right hon. Gentleman the late Home Secretary had said that by the alteration of a single word the Bill would be put upon all-fours with the Scotch Act, and that the Scotch Act had worked very well indeed. [Mr. Macdonald: In Scotland.] In Scotland, of course. If such a simple Amendment introduced into this Bill would make it a good Bill and check a great social evil he thought that they need not be deterred by the thunders of the noble Lord, whose knowledge of the provisions of the Bill did not appear to be very great; and more especially as the Government had the support of the noble Lord's Colleagues on the Front Bench, who were nearly all of opinion that the Bill was a good one, and who had promised to support it. He (Mr. Mundella) might add that he had no doubt whatever that the Government would receive the support of the House in consenting to the second reading of the Bill, which he hoped would be carried by a large and overwhelming majority.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) said, that the right hon. Gentleman had spoken in a light and airy manner of the alteration necessary in this Bill; but he had omitted to notice the declaration of the hon. Member in charge of the Bill that he would not pledge himself to the Amendments which both sides of the House thought absolutely necessary.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I did not say I would not accept the Amendments.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, the right hon. Gentleman talked about nipping a great social evil in the bud; but he would ask the House to consider whether it was a proper course, after an hour's discussion, to pass a Bill dealing with the interests and with the comfort of every single working man? Why had children been sent to fetch beer from public-houses for the first time in the year of Our Lord 1886? Was this a new social evil—was it so pressing that on a Friday night, after an hour's discussion in a thin House—["Oh!"]—he repeated, in a thin House—the House should sit to pass a Bill which not a single Member three hours ago thought would come on at all? Was that a kind of procedure which hon. Members thought would bring the proceedings of the House into credit with the country? He could assure them that they were very much mistaken. The House was getting into a habit of passing second readings which were never to be more than second readings, of passing abstract Resolutions which were never to be more than abstract Resolutions, and then hon. Members went into the country and spoke of the good things they were going to give the people. He could assure hon. Members that that was not the method by which the new House of Commons was likely to bring itself into credit with the great mass of sound public opinion in this country. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had quoted against his hon. and gallant Friend (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) the speech of Lord Salisbury at Newport, in which Lord Salisbury told the country that in his opinion localities should be left to manage this great question, under proper limitations, for themselves. Lord Salisbury did say that. That was the opinion not only of Lord Salisbury, but of every Gentleman, he thought, on the Opposition side of the House—["No, no!"]—of everybody except the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury).

Mr. HANBURY: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon; there were a good many cries of "No, no!" from these Benches.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, that the contradiction of the hon. Member was the only one that reached his ears, but he apologized. The principle he had just stated, however, was a principle that the late Government had embodied in a Local Government Bill which they proposed to introduce. He wanted to know how that principle was embodied and illustrated in the Bill before the House? The Bill left no Local Option whatever, and no jurisdiction to Local Authorities. How the Government—holding the views they did with regard to the authority Local Bodies ought to have in regard to this question—could assent to this Bill, he was utterly unable to understand. He entirely agreed with his noble Friend (Lord Randolph Churchill). This was a Bill which in its present shape he could not vote for on the second reading, as they had no pledge from the Mover of it that he was prepared to amend it, and it did not embody those principles of Local Option which were necessary.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.) said, the spectacle exhibited by the Front Bench opposite placed Members in considerable difficulty. Those who were disposed to respect the late Home Secretary would have expected that his words would have some weight and authority on his own side.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS: I said I objected to piecemeal dealing with this matter.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH said, he heard every word that fell from the right hon.

Gentleman's lips, and though he threw out a suggestion of that kind at the end of his speech he certainly so expressed himself as to leave the impression that he was going to acquiesce in the second reading of the Bill. It was impossible for the right hon. Gentleman and the noble Lord to enjoy the pleasures of the table and keep themselves entirely *en rapport* with what passed in the House. It was a painful thing to see the late Home Secretary, who had spoken so clearly for the Bill, thrown unceremoniously overboard by the noble Lord when he came in. He could feel some pity for the noble Lord. He was a Party of his own, and required a good deal of freedom and sea room. Nothing was more entertaining and less damaging than the way he put the case. He was a master of light parts, and when he acted in burlesque they all enjoyed the fun; but when he acted a serious part he was not a credit to the House of Commons or himself. If the noble Lord complained that they had taken up this Bill hastily, what were they to say to the noble Lord himself, who said he knew nothing about it except that he casually saw a remark about it in a leading article? They could not regard the joint ideas of the Leaders of the Opposition on this subject as of any value whatever. The confusion of tongues was too great. If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had been in the House when the Bill was moved he would have found that the evil in question was one of great magnitude, and that it was high time something should be done to check the evil. If the Bill was going beyond the real necessities of the case, it could be limited in Committee; but in his opinion the Bill was so simple and necessary that even although, as the noble Lord pointed out, it was the 12th Order, it should be passed, and in Committee it could be made precisely the measure which the House wished to become law. If the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentlemen opposite were in a state of distress at that night's proceedings, let him assure them that on his side Members had had an evening of pleasure and delectation, because it had been possible for them to transact Public Business on behalf of the Temperance Cause; and if right hon. Gentlemen and noble Lords would allow themselves even an extra hour to dinner, probably many of them on his side would not be very sorry.

MR. EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) said, that he did not desire to refer to the speeches which they had had from the two Front Benches in reference to this Bill. It had formed a great Parliamentary controversy, and he would leave it where it was. The hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth), who so warmly supported the Bill, had not said what Bill it was he wished to pass. The hon. Member who moved the present Bill distinctly said it was not aimed at the practice of children going to public-houses to buy beer for themselves, but at the practice of sending them to fetch beer for other people.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg your pardon, that is not so.

MR. EDWARD CLARKE said, he listened to the whole speech, and the hon. Gentleman said that was not what the Bill was aimed at, but that what it was aimed at was the practice of sending children to public-houses to fetch beer. It was seconded by a Gentleman on the Back Benches, who repeated that statement—namely, that it was the sending children to the public-houses to fetch beer for others which was the evil to be attacked. Then came the Representatives of the Government—the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Home Secretary. Both said that that which the hon. Member who introduced the Bill wished to prohibit they would not join him in prohibiting. The Bill forbade working men and working women sending children under 13 to fetch beer from a public-house, and the Leaders of the Government distinctly said—and he (Mr. E. Clarke) hoped they would stand to the declaration—that they would not sanction any legislation of that kind. But if that was so, why should they assist that Bill to go into Committee, unless the hon. Member who proposed the Bill, or someone who was responsible for it, would accept the Bill in the form in which the Government were prepared to assent to it? He believed all sides would agree with what had been said by the Front Government Bench. If it was necessary to have a Bill to forbid publicans supplying children under 13 years of age with drink for the children themselves to consume—if such a Bill was necessary, by all means let it be proposed, and it would go through the House with universal consent. But that was not the Bill which was proposed for acceptance now. It was a pity there should be any necessity for a division on the subject; because if the hon. Member who proposed the Bill meant to stand by his own words, he certainly could not hope for the support of the Government, and if he acceded to the Amendment suggested from the Front Bench, there need be no division, because the House would unanimously pass the Bill through the second reading.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) said, that as his name was upon the back of the Bill, perhaps the House would permit him to say a few words in support of the Motion for its second reading. All the hon. Members in that House who specially represented the working classes were in favour of this measure as a step in the direction of temperance. If the noble Lord were better acquainted with the wants of the working classes, he need not have taken up the position he had. He (Mr. Cossham) had mixed all his life with the working classes, and there was no question in which they took a deeper interest than in temperance.

Mr. MURDOCH (Reading) said, he entirely denied that the effect of the Bill would be to promote temperance amongst the working classes; on the contrary, it would tend rather to promote secret drinking in their homes. He maintained that the sending of children to the public-house for the dinner or supper beer could not be injurious.

Mr. P. McDONALD (Sligo, N.) said, he was in entire sympathy with hon. Members opposite in believing that the abuse of drinking was fatal to the morality and prosperity of the people. At the same time he desired that there should be no piecemeal legislation. He desired that the question should be taken up in its entirety and dealt with by the Government in a general and comprehensive manner. They had had three Bills dealing with this subject disposed of that evening, and he regretted to find that they had been scampered through during the dinner hour. Due and proper attention had not been devoted to the subject, for it was one of vital importance to the people. He objected to the Bill also because it interfered with the privileges of the people. The people nowadays had a feeling of freedom within them. They were educated, and would not easily submit to injustice or an infringement of their rights. This was a question that intimately affected the interests of the masses. It was also a piece of class legislation of the worst possible form. It touched the poor and left the rich man free. It was an attempt to "rob the poor man of his beer," which he did not think they should do. The rich man could go to his club, get gloriously drunk, and stay there all day, and all night too, and there was nobody to interfere with him; but the poor man had no place where he could get his beer except where it was vended. Moreover, this was an attempt to deprive men of it at dinner time. He considered that the Bill might possibly be needed for London, but unquestionably it was by no means suited for the rural districts and the great manufacturing centres. The Bill would work a serious hardship if, when a working man would have but a quarter of an hour or so in which to snatch a hasty meal, it prevented him from sending his child for a mug of beer, and insist on his going himself. It would be a decided injustice. It was not always for the mug of beer that a child was sent to the public-house. It might be for a bottle of soda-water or lemonade, or for a small bottle of whisky, which would be sealed up and inaccessible to the child. No moral injury could be done to children in such cases. He objected to these restrictive measures. He had a great deal of sympathy for the benevolent feelings of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and nobody condemned the abuse of drink more than he did; but he liked a certain freedom of action, and for himself he claimed and used it. He objected to restrictive measures of all kinds. In March last the following bodies had declared that restrictive measures had been a complete failure. The hon. Member was proceeding to read the list of bodies referred to when——

Mr. SPEAKER said, that the hon. Member was departing widely from the subject before the House.

Mr. P. McDONALD said, he would submit to the ruling of the Chair and confine himself to the Bill. The 1st clause imposed a penalty of 20*s*. for the first offence and 40*s*. for the second.

Those penalties were much too high. Then the age fixed was 13. At 13 a child had reached the age of discretion, and ought to be able to judge between good and evil. Ten years ought to be the limit. Then the Bill was only to extend to England and Wales. Why was not Scotland and Ireland included? If it was good for one country it was good for another. No legislation of a piecemeal character should be entertained on this subject, and therefore he had to express his entire disapproval of the Bill. At the same time he could not help bearing testimony to the desirability of some general and comprehensive Bill being introduced by the Government; but he protested against such a thing being left to individual and irresponsible Members.

MR. J. WILSON (Edinburgh, Central) said, that Scotland already had an Act in force similar to the present Bill. If "supply" were interpreted in England as it had been in Scotland, not to include sale to a messenger, the operation of the Bill could not involve any of the hardship to parents which was the basis of all the opposition to the Bill.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) said, with regard to the decisions of the Scotch Courts, he hardly thought that they could be relied on by the people of England. At all events, reference must be had only to the letter of this Bill, assisted, if explanation was required, by the remarks of the Mover, who said the object was to put down the immoral practice of the working classes sending their children—who were often the only individuals they could send—to fetch their midday and evening beer. He did not know whether he should be correct in referring to the hon. Member for East Bristol (Mr. Handel Cossham) as the hon. and rev. Member—but he wished to distinguish him from his right hon. Friend (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)—but he denied that he exclusively represented the feeling of the working classes in this matter. He (Sir James Fergusson) represented a constituency as largely composed of the working classes as any other in the country; and although he was not pledged one way or the other, yet when he was questioned upon this subject he denounced the restrictions which were advocated in some quarters. He was quite certain that the working classes did not require these intense and close restrictions which the hon. Gentleman wished to put upon them. This Bill was one of those narrow and cramping pieces of legislation which the House ought to put down, and was another instance of the way in which these fads were likely to be pressed into the legislation of the country unless the House took a common-sense view of the question. The Bill was oppressive and spiteful, and was not in the interest of the Temperance Cause, and, interfering as it did so materially with the liberties of the people, it was not worthy of the House, or consistent with the legislation hitherto passed by the House.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary) said, he objected to the Bill because it was to be applied to Ireland. He was in favour of more drastic reforms; but this Bill would defeat the object it had in view. He opposed the Bill on the ground that it was inhuman and unjust; it would close the public-houses entirely to sick persons, or those who could only get beer by sending their children for it. It would also tend to drive people into public-houses, because they would not be allowed to send children for liquors to be consumed at home. He would suggest that if the Bill got into Committee the age should be raised to 14 years as in Scotland, and that the word "supply" should be substituted for "sell." The Bill might then be workable.

MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): I wish to say a few words with regard to this Bill which has occupied so much of the time of the House. I wish to say that this question of the liquor trade is obstructing the ordinary Business which Parliament should be engaged on. Three Bills affecting the trade have been before us this evening. Year after year there are a Bill, a Motion, and three or four other things affecting the trade, brought forward by private Members. Now, it is a very surprising thing to me to find that the Gentlemen who are so much against the sale of intoxicating liquor cannot agree amongst themselves to bring in one sweeping measure which will settle the liquor question now and for evermore. That is what we should like. They cannot agree about the matter, and cannot bring in a Bill that will satisfy either their own Party, or the Conservatives, or the Government. The thing is most extraordinary. I am not in favour of the liquor traffic at all, and should be very glad to see a Bill introduced that would do away with it altogether. A right hon. Gentleman opposite spoke in favour of the Bill, and said that this was the proper way to deal with the matter by nipping the thing in the bud. Well, I cannot at all agree with him that this is the right way to go about the matter. I should like to ask hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who interest themselves in this kind of legislation, if they are prepared when they cut off this thing called drink—which is a luxury, and, as such, contributes largely to the Revenue of the country—to give the Government money from some other source in support of the Army and Navy?

Mr. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Member that this Bill deals only with the sale of beer to children.

Mr. O'HANLON: It only deals with the sale of beer to children, no doubt; but, to my mind, it affects householders who have their employment and domestic duties to look after in their own houses, and may desire occasionally to send a child of 12 or 13 years of age out for a mug of beer for dinner to save themselves the necessity of leaving their occupation for the purpose. The question is a very important one. To my mind this is a one-sided sort of legislation. There are a class of Gentlemen in this House who have very good cellars in their own premises, and have them stocked with wine, beer, whisky, and brandy, and I say that for them to take away the opportunity of getting a glass of beer for a population like that of London—a population of over 4,000,000 of people who are unable to procure the luxury we have in our country in the shape of a glass of milk——

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already told the hon. Member that he is irrelevant, and is not discussing the Bill. He is now continuing that irrelevancy.

Mr. O'HANLON: With regard to the beer for the father's dinner, I mean to say that it is very important that the father should not be required to get his dinner without some sort of liquor. I must say that the raising of this liquor question three times to-night is, in my opinion, simply a matter of obstruction to prevent the ordinary Business of the House from taking its proper course. I have heard hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House declare themselves friendly to the working classes. I must say they seem particularly friendly to them, so much so that they want to fine them 20*s.*—which means two weeks' wages—for sending their children to fetch their beer. [An hon. Member: The publican, not the parent, is to be fined.] Well, why should all these penalties fall upon the publican? Why should they not fall on the guilty person or the messenger? It is not just, in my opinion, that a tax of this sort should be laid on the publican. What means will he have of knowing the age of a child? If a child of 12½ years goes into the public-house for beer, how is the publican to examine him? He may say, "What is your age?" and the child may answer, "Thirteen" or "Thirteen and a-half," and if the publican happens to give the beer on the word of the child, and if the child is only 12½ years old, then some friends of the Mover of this Bill, who will, of course, have been watching—as they are constantly doing in connection with matters of this sort—will report the circumstances, and the publican will be fined 20*s.* or more. I do not know why the hon. Member has made the Bill so extensive in its application. He may have some necessity for it in his own constituency in Cornwall; but if his own constituency are of a class that require such legislation that is no reason why he should apply it also to mine, who do not require any measure of the sort. It seems to me that the main object of these hon. Members is really to bring themselves before the public as educators of morality. They wish to make themselves heard and felt, particularly in the fines which, through their instrumentality, will be imposed on the poor publican. As I said, if this Bill had been brought in for the purpose of sweeping away the liquor traffic, it would have had my support; but that is not its object. The Bill will affect my constituents. I tell the hon. Member most candidly and distinctly that it is not at all necessary in Ireland; that if he wishes a Bill for Cornwall, he can have it with the greatest pleasure; and that if he brings forward such a measure he will get my undivided support. Why does the hon.

Member propose one sort of legislation for England and Ireland, and leave Scotland to have another kind? The age under which it is illegal to sell beer to a child in Scotland is 14; but, under this Bill, the limit is to be 13 years. This only proves to my mind that the hon. Member in charge of the Bill considers the English and Irish children far more intelligent than the Scotch. The Mover of the second reading of this Bill has not told us that the doing away with this traffic is for the purpose of increasing the traffic in coffee-houses and other places——

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already twice called the attention of the hon. Member to the fact that his observations are irrelevant. I must now ask him to discontinue his speech.

Mr. O'HANLON at once resumed his seat.

Mr. LEICESTER (West Ham, S.): We ought to take into account the object of the Bill itself. I see that many persons belonging to the Church of England have said that the number of people who nowadays meet on Sundays at the public-houses is something appalling; and I think that when you reflect that between 7,000 and 8,000 children have gone into 200 public-houses in the short space of three hours on a certain day it becomes a very serious matter to fathers and mothers how to stop it. The object and aim of this Bill, as I understand it, is to prevent childhood from being contaminated and depraved by the evil influence of public-houses. ["No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen say "No!" but I would ask them this—is there one amongst them who will engage a servant who has been employed in a public-house; and, if not, why not? One hon. Member opposite said that the real danger is when the children are over 13. Well, if that is so, what becomes of the argument as to innocence? If the danger comes when they are over 13, how can it be innocent for them to fetch beer under 13? If it is dangerous up to 14, it must be dangerous under 13. I was very much amused at the argument against the Bill that it would interfere with the convenience of some people. I had thought that all laws interfered with the convenience of some persons, and how any hon. Member supposed to be possessed of representative intelligence can have failed to learn that I am at a loss to understand. It seems to me that the question is one of the balance of advantage or disadvantage. I admit all the inferences of hon. Members; I admit that families might be put to inconvenience; but I contend that the great good to be achieved by the measure far outweighs any inconvenience which you can put in the other scale. Then, of all men in the world, we had the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) standing up for the rights of the working men. Well, I am very proud of his sudden conversion. Better late than never. I should like to know, however, how it is, when hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite speak about the beer of the poor man, that they are so generously disposed? I think the poor man can take care of his own beer; but, as a matter of fact, there are 350 men in this House elected to legislate on temperance lines, if possible, to get rid of the liquor traffic altogether. I have some documents here in my possession which show that when the working man wanted a vote the noble Lord was not so generous in bestowing it upon him. Now that it is a question of beer, however, he is very generous indeed. I, for one, believe that keeping children away from public-houses will tend to their virtue and morality, and for that reason I shall go heart and soul for the measure. We hear hon. Gentlemen talk a great deal about the advantages possessed by the rich. No doubt, the rich have advantages over the poor; but that is the accident of wealth. Do hon. Gentlemen say that because wealth possesses advantages, therefore you must dismantle rich men of their riches? Under the present state of things, whatever system you may adopt, wealth must possess advantages which the poor can never enjoy. Whatever licensing laws we may have, the rich have already stocked their cellars with wine; but the poor man cannot lay in a stock of beer, to say nothing of wine; and if you base your argument upon this, I would say why do you not come down to your logical position, and say—"Get rid of the licensing law altogether?" But, as a matter of fact, wealth cannot be interfered with because it has advantages over poverty. Believing that this measure, if passed into law, will greatly improve the moral tone of the working classes, I, for one, shall give it my cordial support.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): I think it is desirable that the House should, if possible, come back for a few moments to what may be called the common-sense view of the measure. Although when measures affecting the working classes are proposed from this side of the House it is a very common thing for hon. Members opposite to say that we have no right to introduce them, I trust that some of those hon. Gentlemen opposite know that there are, at any rate, a good many hon. Members on this side who do their best to ascertain what is to the advantage of the working classes, and who endeavour to pass measures based upon the result of their investigations, or who report those results to the House. I trust, also, there are many hon. Members on this side of the House who have the cause of temperance at heart. I can only say that, practically independently of Party, I shall be able to vote for any measure that promotes the interests of temperance. But when we know what this Bill proposes, as it stands, I do not think anyone who is acquainted with the working of these matters can for a moment believe that it will promote the cause of temperance. What is it that we have been striving for in our legislation? We have been striving to keep men and women who are addicted to drink out of the public-houses; and I submit to the House that it would be far better and more desirable that men and women should be encouraged to stay in their homes, and have their meals in their homes, rather than take them in the public-houses. A man who is weak and cannot resist the temptation of drink when he finds himself in a public-house will stay there. As I understand it, this measure is framed in the plainest terms to provide that intoxicating liquor shall not be supplied to any person under 13 years of age. The result of passing the Bill would be that if children are sent for their parents' beer and they are under 13 years of age, if the publican serve them, it would cause him to be subjected to a penalty. It is now said that that is not intended; but I emphatically assert that that is the object and intention of those who have brought in the Bill. As I understand it, the hon. Member who moved the Bill said that that was his object. We ought really to know what is the principle of the Bill we are discussing, and, as it appears to me, the measure has been brought in with that intention. There ought to be some liberty—some recognition of freedom of will—in this matter. If there are hon. Gentlemen who think that all alcoholic liquors are bad and demoralizing, let them endeavour to pass measures which will suppress the sale of intoxicants altogether. I can quite understand such a state of information and such an amount of knowledge as to the nature of alcohol becoming universal that people might come to the conclusion that its sale ought to be prohibited; but at any rate, notwithstanding what has fallen from the hon. Member for West Ham (Mr. Leicester), we have no right to prevent sober working men from having their glass of beer with their dinner in their own homes. Working men come home for a very short time, and it may be necessary for them during the short time they are there to have their beer. I want to know what reason there is why the sending of a child of 10 or 13 years of age to fetch a father's beer under such circumstances should be regarded as a criminal act? I must say that, in the somewhat discursive and amusing speech made by the hon. Gentleman below the Gangway (Mr. O'Hanlon), it did seem to me, as he pointed out, rather a strong thing to say that a publican should be guilty of a criminal offence because he supplied beer to a child, not for the purpose of its being drunk on the premises, but for the purpose of being carried home to the child's parents, the publican having no means of knowing what the child's real age was. As I have said, I would gladly support this or any other measure if it were likely to promote the cause of temperance; but it seems to me that this is simply interfering, not with the propensities of those who are addicted to drink, or with those people who are likely to be misled into the public-house, but with the ordinary and just rights of the working man. I will be no party to anything which practically says that the working man shall not get liquor in his own house when we ourselves can get it to any extent we please in ours.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Broadhurst) (Birmingham, Bordesley): I do not think the hon. and learned Gentleman was present when the Home Secretary spoke in regard to this measure, and described some of the limitations to the present proposal which he will make on behalf of the Government should this measure get to the Committee stage.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The hon. Member for Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) refused to accept those limitations.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg pardon; the right hon. and learned Member is entirely mistaken.

Mr. BROADHURST: It may be true that the Mover of the second reading has refused to accept the limitations; but I think, if the right hon. and learned Gentleman will consult right hon. Gentlemen on his right and left, he will find that the form which a Bill introduced by a private Member may ultimately take does not always depend upon the pleasure of the Mover. Probably the hon. and learned Member has not seen so many levellings of Bills of private Members as some of his right hon. Friends in his immediate locality. With regard to the speech which has just been made, I noticed a very general tone of similarity between it and several others which have come from the same quarter to-night, particularly as to the question of the inconvenience which they say the working classes will suffer if their children are not allowed to go to the public-houses to fetch their dinner beer. Well, Sir, my experience as a working man in many parts of the country leads me to quite a different conclusion. I do not think there would be any general inconvenience if even the Bill was passed in its present very severe form. I do not agree with the hon. and learned Member that if the beer is not fetched by the children from the public-house the parents will visit the public-house themselves to get it, and will drink it there. So far as my experience has gone, where it is the habit of the family to drink beer with their meals, there is no difficulty experienced by the parents in providing themselves with it by their own journeyings to the public-house. ["Oh!"] I do not understand what that "Oh!" is about. Surely hon. Members will admit that it is as easy for a man or a woman to go to a public-house to fetch beer as it is for an infant. ["No!"] Well, where is the difficulty? I should like hon. Gentlemen to point it out. My experience is that parents usually do fetch it for themselves, and that any considerate parent would rather do that, and in many cases would rather go without it altogether, than risk sending their young children into these public-houses where they may be kept waiting for many minutes with great danger both to their present morals and to their future life. My reading in this matter leads me to make the assertion that all social reformers and all temperance advocates of all classes, at all times, have always warned the people against that association of their infant children with public-house language and conduct which naturally results from sending them to the public-house for dinner and supper beer. My opinion is that this measure is crude in the extreme, but that a great many of the working classes will most readily accept the restrictions it proposes to impose upon them. The whole drift of public opinion, whether amongst teetotallers or the moderate drinking classes, is in favour of temperance legislation of this kind, and especially where it seeks to dissociate children and young members of families from any connection or experience of the public-house, its surroundings, and its vile influences. If this Bill should go to a second reading, I shall certainly give my vote in support of it in the full confidence that I shall not by so doing be offending any considerable number of the great working class constituency which I have the honour to represent in this House. May I say one word to my hon. Friend the Member for Cornwall with regard to this debate to-night? I would give him a friendly warning not to be too impatient of debate and discussion in putting forward proposals of this kind. If he had had the privilege of sitting in the last Parliament he would think himself exceedingly fortunate in having got the second reading stage of a measure of this description after one, two, or three nights' debate, let alone securing it in a debate only extending over half of a Friday evening. I am not surprised that there is considerable opposition to the Bill; but I am certain of this, that if it goes to a second reading, the Bill will be carried by a considerable majority of the House, consisting not alone of Members on these Benches, but Members below the Gangway on this and the other side of the House, and of Members behind the Front Opposition Bench. I have never witnessed a more remarkable diversity of opinion on the other side of the House than I did to-night when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour) was speaking. There was scarcely an hon. Member in his immediate locality who did not differ with some part of his speech; and if I gathered the sense of his Friends rightly, they all object to the firm and determined opposition he appears to be offering to this very reasonable and wise proposal.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I was rather surprised that the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Broadhurst) should have congratulated the hon. Member responsible for this Bill upon his good fortune in having very probably secured its second reading to-night, because, of all the circumstances which have occurred during the present Session, I think few are more remarkable than the proceedings of this evening. We have had all sorts of Bills nominally under discussion, three-fourths of which nobody could have expected would have been reached, and all of which were reached owing to the default of the Government for whom the hon. Gentlemen spoke, because they did not take the ordinary and proper course of attempting to proceed with the important Business of Supply. This is a point with regard to which we are, I think, entitled to make very grave complaint; and I shall bear it in mind when next the Government come to this House for a Vote on Account, because it will be perfectly clear that they have not utilized the time at their disposal. But, Sir, I have something more to say on the way in which the Government have let the Orders of the Day, for which private Members are responsible, take the place of Government Business, which ought to have been proceeded with, if possible, on a Friday night. There is something very remarkable in the nature of the Business which has principally occupied our time. I think if there is one matter on which, if legislation is desirable, the Government of the day ought to attempt to legislate, it is this matter of the liquor laws. There is no question upon which hasty or intemperate legislation is more likely to conflict with the established habits of the people, and, therefore, to promote a dangerous reaction against some law which Parliament may pass without due consideration. Therefore, there is no subject on which, if the House of Commons is asked to legislate, the legislation ought more certainly to be proposed by the Government of the day. Yet, what do we find? In arranging the Paper of Business for this evening Her Majesty's Government have indirectly presented no less than three measures dealing with the liquor laws in England and Ireland. They are not courageous enough to make themselves responsible for any one of these proposals. They have talked enough about this question, both in Office and in Opposition; but they have not hitherto ventured to submit their own proposals upon it to Parliament. Therefore, they take advantage of the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Conybeare), who is responsible for this Bill, and of the hon. Member for Durham; and they seek, in this illegitimate way, to foist the proposals of these hon. Members on the House of Commons without themselves being responsible for the legislation. Now, I must say that that is a course which is not becoming either to the Government or to the House, and is not calculated to lead to that successful dealing with this important question which we all desire. What is the proposal that the hon. Member for Cornwall has made? He proposes in all cases to prohibit the sale of any intoxicating liquors to any person under the age of 13 years. I do not wish to dwell upon the obvious objections to such a proposal—such as the impossibility of ascertaining the age of the child—since these have already been placed before the House; but I would remind the House that we have had from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Childers) a statement of the views of Her Majesty's Government upon this question. We understand the right hon. Gentleman plainly to state, as representing the Government, that he does not approve of the wide scope of the Bill as it stands, and that it would be his desire to limit it very considerably in Committee, so as to make it somewhat analogous to the existing Scotch law. Now, that is an intelligible proposal. The hon. Member the Under Secretary for the Home Department seems to think that, as a matter of course, having been suggested by the Government, that proposal will be carried. Well, I congratulate him upon his estimate of the power of the Government; but I venture to differ from him. I am not at all sure——

MR. BROADHURST: I beg to correct the right hon. Gentleman. I did not say that because the Government have suggested it it would be carried as a matter of course; but I suggested that it is not likely to be resisted simply because the hon. Member in charge of the Bill says he cannot accept it.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: At any rate, the hon. Member spoke very hopefully of the power of the Government in this matter. I would only remind him that when measures of this kind are supported with that fanaticism in which they are apt to originate, we have known a Government, very much like that which now occupies the Front Bench opposite, yielding all of a sudden, without an attempt to stand by the opinions they had expressed in debate. But, more than this, the Home Secretary has taken one view of the matter, and the Under Secretary for the Home Department has taken an absolutely opposite view. According to the Under Secretary, the hon. Member for Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) is right, and his Chief is wrong. He would approve of the entire proposition of the hon. Member for Cornwall. He told us a great deal about the desire of parents to keep their children from the contamination of the society in public-houses. But if such is the desire of parents, they need not send their children to the public-house. What is the use of legislating for parents who have that desire and do not at present send their children to public-houses? Then, of course, comes in that tyrannical notion which appears to dominate the minds of all true Liberals on this liquor question—namely, that in the name of those who do not want to send their children to public-houses you are to to prevent those who do send them there from being able to do so. Without saying one single word in defence of a parent who would voluntarily send his child into society of that kind, I would say that the existence of such parents, in considerable numbers, is precisely why this Bill, if it should unhappily become law, would prove a disastrous failure. Either it would not be carried out—and that is the very worst thing which could happen to the law—or else, if carried out, it would be found to conflict with the everyday-habits of thousands of the working men of this country. It would be found an intolerable nuisance; a reaction would set in, and there would be a demand made for the entire repeal of the Act. Then those who desire to see the sale of liquor to children for their own use forbidden will find themselves farther than ever from their object, because the law which has prevented children from going to public-houses to fetch beer for their fathers and mothers has gone too far. That does seem to be the great danger that surrounds all attempts at legislation of this kind, and that is why legislation on a liquor question should especially be in the hands of a Government, and not of a Government whose Under Secretary for the Home Department differs from his Chief, but of a Government which is able to reconcile the conflicting views of its own Members in the same Department. I trust that if we are called upon to divide on this Bill unexpectedly, to-night, that, at any rate, we shall vote upon it as it now stands, after the speech of the Under Secretary. We shall vote upon it, I hope, as, what I believe it to be, a tyrannical measure, though brought in with the best intention—tyrannical because, in order to effect a good object, it goes beyond that object, and will interfere materially with the ordinary daily habits of many thousands of our working population.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): We have had this evening, as we shall always have when these liquor questions are discussed, shilly-shally speeches from hon. Gentlemen who want to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds—who want to be supported by the publicans on the one hand, and by the temperance people on the other; but I must really congratulate the right hon. Gentleman who has just down upon having made a bold and honest liquor speech. I do not agree with him, but still I am bound to congratulate him. I was somewhat surprised at the commencement of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. He professed himself astonished at our having got through such a large amount of Business this evening. He was horrified at the idea of this House getting through its Business, particularly on a Friday night. He complained of the Government, and said their conduct was perfectly monstrous; and that they ought to have stepped in and have prevented all the Bills which have been divided against this evening from being reached, by going into Committee of Supply. Now, the right hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well that while, years ago, it was very often the custom of the House to go into effective Supply on a Friday night, for the last few years there has been hardly a single instance in which that has been done. [*Laughter.*] Yes, I repeat, there has been hardly a single instance in which the House has gone into effective Supply on a Friday night. But the right hon. Gentleman surely had not looked at the Paper with which we are furnished to tell us what is to take place in the evening. He must have known very well that, when it is intended to go into effective Supply, the Votes that are to be taken in Supply are set down on the Paper. Well, to-day they were not upon the Paper; therefore, he must have known perfectly well that the Government had not the slightest intention of going into Supply. The right hon. Gentleman and his Friends come strolling in late in the evening, and are exceedingly surprised that they have not had an opportunity of discussing, and possibly of obstructing, the several excellent measures that have been advanced a stage. But I think the protest of the right hon. Gentleman was still more surprising. It is a protest which comes very frequently from that Bench, and, I may say, from the Front Bench on this side also. "Why?" he said, "is the House to assent to a private Member's Bill?" Why, I would ask, is the House not to assent to a private Member's Bill? For my part, I sometimes even assent to a Government Bill. I look at a Bill on its merits, whether it comes from this side of the House or from that, or from this side of the Gangway or the other. If a Bill is a good one, I vote in favour of it. The right hon. Gentleman said the Government were shirking responsibility, because they do not themselves deal with this liquor question. Let me ask him if they have had time to deal with it? They have had two nights a-week; but those nights have always been occupied, and it looks very much to me as though, for some time henceforward, not only will the Government days be occupied, but private Members' days also will be taken up by the consideration of some great and eminent measure which the Government intend to bring forward. As to the argument of the right hon. Gentleman and those who act with him, they object to this Bill because they consider that parents who like to send their children to public-houses should be allowed to do so. But we hold just the reverse. We say that they ought not be allowed to do it. We admit very fully that a great many parents do send their children to public-houses to fetch drink. Statistics have been obtained of the number of children that have gone into public-houses on certain days; but let me ask any hon. Member of this House would he wish his own children to go into public-houses—would he send his own children into public-houses? Most certainly he would not; and he knows perfectly well that children of tender age cannot gain any good by going into public-houses. I have been in public-houses, and I suppose other hon. Gentlemen have done the same; and, even at my age, I have not found the language which is ordinarily used in these places very improving. I am too old, Sir, for it to demoralize me; but I can easily conceive that it might demoralize a young child. Why, anyone who goes into these places must hear improper language used. [Cries of "No!"] I say "Yes;" and I say that if hon. Members were to poll respectable publicans themselves, either in the Metropolis or in any other part of the country, they would find that they not only object to serving children with liquor, but object to children coming into their public-houses. We were told by one hon. Member opposite that if children were not allowed to be sent to public-houses, their parents would have to go without their beer, as they would not be able to fetch it themselves. But bachelors, who have no children, drink beer with their dinner. They have to get it for themselves; and why should not those persons who have children do the same? Another hon. Member has told us that the Bill ought not to apply to Ireland. Well, that is a question to be considered in Committee. In Committee hon. Members from Ireland can raise that point; and probably the English and Scotch Members will consent to their view, if it is entertained by the majority of the Irish Representatives. Another hon. Member opposite—the late Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) —whose views do not appear to me to coincide with those of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) pointed out that the Scotch Act, which fixes the age of the children at 14, has worked extremely well. It does not injure Scotchmen, and we know that they drink more than Englishmen. [*A laugh.*] I speak statistically. Surely, if these Scotchmen can find time to visit the public-houses to fetch their drink, Englishmen can do the same. You may depend upon this—that there will not be one drop less beer drunk by adults if you prevent the children from fetching it. The man who wants his beer will take uncommonly good care to get his beer. If he is not able to send his child, he will go himself, or send his wife. I consider this Bill an excellent one, and I trust that it will pass a second reading this evening. There has been some discussion upon it, but not an exhaustive discussion; and I think it is likely there are other hon. Gentlemen anxious to speak, and that the discussion will continue for at least another 20 minutes.

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has stated, apparently with some authority on the part of those who are responsible for this Bill, that if, when it comes into Committee, the majority of the Irish Members should desire that it should not apply to Ireland, those who are promoting it will assent to that desire. Do I understand that the hon. Gentlemen who have charge of the Bill would agree to that suggestion?

Mr. CONYBEARE: Yes.

Mr. PARNELL: That relieves me and my Colleagues from some considerable difficulty, because I am not, at present, in a position to say whether the majority of our Party are in favour of this Bill or not. Since I have had a seat in this House I have always attempted to keep clear of these temperance questions. I have never voted on any of them, because I think that the question of temperance and of the control of the liquor trade, is one which, of all others, could most suitably and properly be left to an Irish Legislature to deal with. I believe most firmly that this House will never satisfactorily deal with the liquor traffic in Ireland. If it be understood that the promoters of the Bill will favourably take into consideration the opinion of the majority of my Colleagues as to whether or not the measure should or should not apply to Ireland, I think I may say on their behalf that those of them who, up to the present moment, have opposed the Bill, will retire from further opposition.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): Sir, this is a Bill on which it is difficult for any hon. Member to give a silent vote. For my part, I cannot join in a vote which would interfere between parent and child; that is to say, I think that the father and mother are the best judges as to where a child should be sent. I do not deny that there are cases in which the law ought to interfere between the parent and the child, but I do not think that this is one of those cases in which we should be justified in interfering. It should be remembered that the Bill is to refer to all quiet little country places, where there are small public-houses which are empty for the most part during the day, and where a child might be sent most innocently. I must, therefore, honestly say I cannot vote for the Bill as it stands. If a measure were brought in which provided that intoxicating liquor should not be sold to children for their own consumption, I would vote for it without hesitation.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's County, Birr): I support this Bill with all my heart. Anybody who has been in the habit of walking through the streets of this Metropolis at a late hour and has seen the immorality and drunkenness which exist will, I believe, vote for a Bill which offers, however small, a remedy for that state of things. I think it is the bounden duty of any man who has a care for the welfare of children to support this Bill. I hope, as my hon. Friend has said, that when the Bill goes into Committee the question of the application of the Bill to Ireland will be decided by my hon. Friends voting for the measure.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I shall certainly be willing to agree to the exclusion of Ireland from the operation of the Bill.

Mr. CARBUTT (Monmouth, &c.): Like the hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton), I do not wish to give a silent vote. I wish to say that if the hon. Member had accepted the Amendment proposed by the Government I should have supported him; but, as he has not done so, I shall vote against the Motion.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I wish to say that, after the statement of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and the assent on the part of the promoters that Ireland should be omitted from its provisions, I shall vote against the Bill.

Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): I do not understand all the difficulties which have been raised about this Bill. I believe my hon. Friend who brought in the Bill had no idea of the amount of discussion which would take place. One would infer, from the way in which one part of the subject has been spoken of, that, to ascertain the age of a child, some people imagine that the publican would have to examine the child as a veterinary examines a horse's teeth. That sort of language, Sir, is absurd. We do not believe that respectable publicans who desire to carry on their business properly wish to have small children in their houses. I cannot imagine that any respectable publican would like to see such children shouldering their way amonst the people frequenting his house. The sending of children to public-houses, moreover, teaches them early to drink; for no one can forget that he has seen children sipping the beer which they are carrying home. There is no doubt that the principle of the Bill is a right one, and ought to be accepted. The hon. Member says that if in Scotland children are not allowed to enter a public-house before they are 14 years of age, the children in England should be treated in the same way. In this Bill it is proposed that the limit should be 13 years. For my own part, I am opposed to there being any difference in the matter as between the two countries; and I say that if the law for Scotland is 14 years, it should be the same in England, or *vice versa.* There is another point of considerable importance, and that is that the hon. Gentleman who has brought in this Bill has been attacked because it only applies to a small part of the question. I find that hon. Members opposite, especially Conservative Members, object to large Bills which embrace large principles; and therefore many hon. Members are compelled to bring in small Bills, and so deal with questions bit by bit. We had an example of that the other day in the Women's Enfranchisement Bill. With regard to this Bill, I believe that almost all of us hold that my hon. Friend is conferring a benefit alike on the parent, the publican, and the child, by bringing in the Bill in its present form. The argument has been put forward that a parent may himself object to go to a public-house because he feels that he is not strong enough to resist the temptation to remain there, and that therefore he sends his child; and another argument is that a parent may not understand the temptation to which he exposes his child. But I believe those arguments would not have been put forward if the hon. Gentleman who used them had given them a moment's consideration, and my object in calling attention to them is simply to refute them. With regard to the liquor question, it would, no doubt, be better not to have piecemeal legislation; but the House is so burdened with Business that it seems desirable to use any opportunity we may get to deal with this question. I think my hon. Friend is lucky in having the Motion for the second reading of the Bill down tonight, when it is likely to be carried. I am satisfied that there is no feeling amongst the publicans against the Bill. My experience is that publicans are not at all slow in telling you when they have an objection to a Bill, and to the present Bill I have not heard, as coming from that class, a single objection. Therefore, if I belonged to the Conservative Party I should not be ashamed to support the Bill; and, as Liberals, although we do not get much publican support, I do not think we are doing any harm to the publicans, whom I do not wish to injure, in asking that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): There is a misapprehension with regard to the law of Scotland on this subject. The law of Scotland does not allow children under 14 years of age to get drink for themselves in public-houses, but it does not prevent parents sending their children to a public-house for what they themselves want. I therefore hope the House will not support the Motion for the second reading of the Bill.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 132; Noes 115: Majority 17.—(Div. List, No. 60.)

Bill *committed* for *Tuesday* 13th April.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE BILL.

(*Mr. Moulton, Mr. A. Acland, Mr. Dillwyn.*)

[BILL 124.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. MOULTON (Clapham): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of this Bill, which deals with matters which I am sure all Members of the House must have seen, during the recent elections, needed serious legislation. The anomalies of the Parliamentary franchise under our present laws are so great that, in the case of a very large number of people, especially of the poorer classes, we find that the provisions which purport to give to the voters a right to vote on an occupation of one year are perfectly illusory, and that it takes two or three years of continuous occupation of exactly the same tenement and in exactly the same character, before a man is able to exercise the privilege of the franchise. If we take the very simple case of the lodger franchise, we find it is impossible for anyone to get upon the Register until from one June to another June he has occupied lodgings in the same house in the same borough; and even then six months elapse before his right to vote becomes effective, and another year may pass before he is able to use it. Much the same state of things exists with regard to other franchises. Now, Sir, this practically means that the period for qualification is something like two or three years; and the anomaly of this is turned into a real injustice when you consider that if there is any change in the character of the qualification during that period, disfranchisement is complete. A very simple case of this kind occurred in the division which I have the honour to represent. It was the case of a person who, being a lodger for the greater portion of the year at a rental which would have entitled him to the franchise, married, and took a house. The consequence was he was disqualified, although the occupation of the house would have been sufficient to qualify him by itself, or the occupation of his lodgings would have been sufficient itself to give him the vote. Now, I am not going at this late hour (12.45) to detain the House with any lengthy speech upon this Bill. The Bill simply goes to the root of the matter so far as this kind of disfranchisement is concerned. It looks upon the possession of a qualification as granting to the man who possesses it a personal *status* which is not in the least altered by the fact that he changes the position of the house he occupies or the lodging he occupies. By this Bill, if a man has possessed a qualification during a sufficient period, no matter whether the qualification is in one borough or another, or what its nature may be, he is to have, as he ought to have, the right to vote in respect of it. I cannot imagine how any hon. Members who really believe that our qualifications for the franchise are righteous can think it is right to disfranchise a man because he has lived, say, on one side of Brixton Road during one part of the year and on the other side of the same road during the other part of the year. It seems to me that hon. Members who wish to keep up these artificial distinctions must wish to do so with some Party motive — possibly because they think that the classes of voters who support them are not subject to removal so frequently as the classes who oppose them. I, however, have great confidence that the general fairness of the Members of the House will admit that reform in this respect is necessary. Now, Sir, that is the great principle of the Bill. It takes the two main qualifications—the qualification of being a householder, and the qualification of occupying premises of the value of £10 a-year—and it says the possession of one of these qualifications during the required time, however frequently the nature of the qualification is changed, shall be sufficient to entitle a man to the vote. The qualifying period is fixed at six months. But the next question which every Bill of this kind must deal with is, where is the man to vote? The Bill provides that he is to vote, as I think most hon. Members will agree he should vote, in the district in which he resides at the end of the qualifying period. Now, this has two effects, two most important effects. In the first place, it gets rid of the difficulty as to where a man is to vote; and, secondly, it takes away that multiplicity of votes which is most unfairly given to some persons by reason that the properties they occupy are distributed in different boroughs. It is, I submit, monstrous that a person who occupies five places in one borough should have but one vote, while, if the five places were situated in five different boroughs, he would have a multiplicity of votes. In this, the 19th century, and the latter part of the century, I trust there can be found no one who will support the principle of representation in proportion to wealth; and if this is not representation in proportion to wealth, it is something very much like it. Now, Sir, another very great and most important provision of the Bill is that it no longer respects those franchises which are simply bought. It is a crime to bribe a voter; but, according to the present state of the law, it is no crime whatever to buy for yourself a vote by the investment of something like £50 or £60 in every county division in England. The Bill proposes to entirely do away with that. It proposes to leave the franchise as it should be regarded, a purely personal right which cannot be acquired merely by the investment of a little money. And the last point to which I will call the attention of the House is that the Bill proposes to include all the laws which regulate the franchise in one short Bill. The laws which govern and define the civil rights of the people of England should, at all events, if possible, be intelligible to the people. Although we respect the franchise highly, and regard it as one of the civil rights most precious to the inhabitants of England, the laws which regulate and confer that franchise are contained in something like 60 Statutes. This Bill collects together the whole of the necessary provisions; and in one small Statute is included all those laws which in the future will confer the franchise on the people of the country. The Bill is simple and intelligible, and I trust the House will consider that that is in itself a very important point. To sum up, this Bill proposes to prevent any mere change of qualification from disfranchising the voter; it proposes to take away those franchises which are merely bought; and it proposes to consolidate in one short Act the whole of the laws which regulate the possession of the franchise. As such, I trust it will command the support of the House, and I move its second reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Moulton.*)

Sir HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): I am not surprised that my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Moulton) should say this is a very important measure. It is a very important measure indeed; and I hope that hon. Members, before they give their vote in favour of its second reading, will master its details. Sir, it is not very long since the late Parliament came to a very important decision in relation to the question of the franchise in this country. I will not say that any compromise was effected; but I will say that the moderation of the Franchise Act of 1884 commended itself not only to the then Parliament, but, I think, to the constituencies of the country generally. Now, Sir, this Bill is, in fact, an entire and total departure from the Franchise Act of 1884; and if it be true that such alterations as are proposed should be made, I think I am justified in asking that they shall not be made, by the inadvertent act of this Bill remaining on the Notice Paper, without attention being called to it, and without full opportunity being afforded hon. Members of the House of mastering the contents of the Bill. I am afraid that, in consequence of the events of this evening, many hon. Members of the House are not aware of the contents of the measure proposed by my hon. and learned Friend in the few words he has addressed to the House. The real truth is, that, in the first place, this Bill entirely destroys the ownership vote, and it destroys the best class of the ownership voters — namely, the small freeholders of the country. I will not go into the question whether this ownership vote should exist at all; but if it is abolished, it can only be abolished after full discussion. If the small freeholders of the country are to be deprived of the franchise by a Liberal Member, the fact ought to be known, and full opportunity given for the discussion of so great a principle. I may tell the House, for I presume that very few hon. Members can have the Bill in their hands, this is really a repeal in its terms of the Franchise Act of 1884 to this extent—that it puts the provisions of that great measure on one side, and re-enacts only those which my hon. and learned Friend thinks it right to agree with. We have also this important alteration proposed—that one month's residence is to give a man the vote. It may be right or wrong that this should be so; but surely such a change should only be made after full and mature consideration. There are a great many changes proposed by the Bill; but, at least, there is one striking change which the hon. and learned Gentleman has not mentioned—namely, that all borough elections throughout the country shall take place on the same day, and all county elections on the same day; and in order, I suppose, to make it more satisfactory and more convenient to all concerned, the hon. and learned Gentleman proposes that elections shall always take place on a Saturday. I do not doubt that there may be a great deal to be said in favour of such propositions; but these propositions amount to radical changes, changes of the greatest moment to the citizens of the country. Has this Bill ever been mentioned in the country; has anyone ever heard of it? I put it to my hon. and learned Friend that if he wishes to obtain support for the great principles involved in this Bill, does he not think it right they should be open to fair discussion in the presence of a full House? Taking this view, and taking some little interest in the legislation of last Session, I do hope I may be permitted to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Sir Henry James.*)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby): I hope my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Moulton) who moved the second reading of the Bill will not object to the adjournment of the debate. It is quite clear that no one expected that a Bill of this importance would come on at 1 o'clock in the morning. I will not attempt to offer any opinion upon the details of the Bill—I must frankly confess I am not sufficiently acquainted with them to do so—but say that there is no doubt that this Bill intends to make great changes in the settlement of the franchise question arrived at last year. That may or may not be a good thing to do; but, at all events, it should not be done by surprise. My hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Moulton) has had the advantage of stating his case to the House, and therefore I hope he will not object to the adjournment of the debate.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.); I should like to say that, while I entirely agree with what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), it appears to me most extraordinary for a new Member, whatever his abilities and eminence in his profession may be, to bring in such a measure as this, which, as the hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir Henry James) has said, absolutely repeals the existing law governing the Parliamentary franchise of this country, and to press it on at 1 o'clock in the morning. Personally, I should like to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE.

Select Committee *appointed,* "to re-consider the plans and proposals for an Admiralty and a War Office;"—That it be an Instruction to the Committee to report whether some or all of the existing buildings of the Admiralty may not with advantage be retained.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

House adjourned at One o'clock
till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 5th April, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (No. 2)* (58).

Second Reading—Compensation for Damages* (50); Army (Annual)* (55).

ZEBEHR PASHA.—RESOLUTION.

LORD RIBBLESDALE, in rising to call attention to the detention of Zebehr Pasha at Gibraltar, and to the effect of such detention upon the Sûdan provinces; and to move—

> "That the time had come when, under certain conditions, his presence in the Sûdan might prove valuable in the interests of Egypt and the pacification of the Sûdan provinces,"

said, he should like to divide the Motion into two separate parts. First, he wished to call attention to the slender justification for Zebehr Pasha's further detention, and to its possible and unfavourable reaction on the mind of Upper Egypt. Secondly, he would try to persuade the House that, to quote the words of his Notice—

> "The time had come when, under certain conditions, his presence in the Soudan might prove valuable in the interests of Egypt and the pacification of the Sûdan provinces."

Might he ask their Lordships' pardon beforehand for a bold inversion of Parliamentary usage, in that, so far as this latter part of his Notice was concerned, he criticized nothing and he suggested something? Let him advance another plea for a patient hearing. He would eschew Blue Books and their interpretations and teachings. This determination might be to their Lordships' comfort and need not hurt his cause; for he was often amused at the double debt a passage in a Blue Book would contrive to pay when it had been taken by the throat and well shaken by speakers of opposite wishes and opinions. He confessed personal leanings and attachments to the cause he was undertaking. But let him assure their Lordships that he should not presume to occupy a moment of their time were he not sincerely convinced that considerations of policy and equity might thus be presented which could not be assigned to the amiable promptings of interest and friendship. Before going further he had better explain the nature of his own relations with Zebehr Pasha, and with the circumstances of his detention at Gibraltar. Zebehr Pasha was now living with a small retinue in the Governor's cottage at Gibraltar—a summer *dépendance* of the convent or Government House. The establishment was placed in charge of an officer of the garrison. This individual's duties were to administer prudently all moneys allowed by the Imperial Treasury for housekeeping and other expenses, to forward and to receive the Pasha's correspondence through constituted authorities, to attend to his wishes as far as might be, and to observe such friendly and courteous relations as might sweeten the bitterness of banishment from home and kindred. Up to no later date than the 10th of last month "this individual" was their Lordships' humble servant, himself. He took over these duties early in December; so for three months he saw a great deal of and talked a great deal to Zebehr. At first Zebehr used only to tell him of the moving adventures of his old life in the Bahr-el-Ghajal. But as they came to know each other better they used to talk of the Soudan, of General Gordon, of the Mahdi, of the Slave Trade, of the Cairo Pashas, of duties and taxation, and of many unhappy and far off things. These conversations were at once serious and animated, and to him most interesting and delightful. They were carried on through an interpreter by name Hamed. Hamed was an old man now, but his beard grew in the Zoological Gardens. He came to England as the personal escort and attendant of the first hippopotamus which visited our shores, and he learnt English in a school in the Borough Road. Perhaps he oftened heightened the stories of the wild men and wild beasts of the Bahr-el-Ghajal days. Once, however, the conversation touched upon the state of affairs and feelings in the Soudan. Hamed did his utmost to catch the exact and narrowest sense of whatever he had to translate. Hamed was an Arab from Dongola. The Slave Question interested him especially. So excited did he become one day that he dashed his turban half off his head, and an Oriental who took liberties with his headgear was really moved. He would ask their Lordships whether Zebehr Pasha's detention could any longer be justified? Our past in Egypt was not of a kind which called up easily pleasing recollections. Therefore, let them leave the past alone. He wished to invite their Lordships to look at the present and the future. Now, if this country could handle no results of a vast expenditure of treasure, no results of an historical waste of huge resources, no results of the sacrifice to sword and sickness of many brave lives, she could, at all events, point proudly to a living monument of her robust diplomacy. Twelve months ago Zebehr Pasha was deported to Gibraltar from Alexandria. He had gone to Alexandria on a visit to a holy Koran scholar. At the same time, his letters, papers, and correspondence were seized at Cairo. Rumour whispered that the result of this *coup de main* was rather disappointing, and that nothing very compromising was found. Be that as it might, Zebehr Pasha remained a prisoner at Gibraltar, the authority recently and officially quoted in "another place" for his detention being an Order in Council of that Colony; no public investigation or trial of his case had been instituted, although he had begged for it more than once himself; and it seemed time to ask seriously how long and to what ends his further detention might be contemplated? Discounting the obvious uncertainty of his present position, and that longing for domestic life which often distinguished the elderly and patriarchal Oriental, Zebehr was wonderfully contented. Indeed, when he said, touching his forehead, that to govern was very difficult; that all Governments were alike and must have allowance made for them; that he knew he must be patient and wait—"something," he said, "is working in their minds"—there was something rather dreary about that content. But within the precincts of the cottage he enjoyed the necessaries and some of the luxuries of life. If during the winter he often regretted a warmer sunshine, he appreciated English grates and English coal; anxieties which oppressed him at first as to the financial welfare of a helpless concourse of wives and children at Cairo had been removed; and his letters home, as he himself assured him, breathed the cheerful spirit of one of the few examples he remembered in the Latin Grammar —"*Si tu et Cicero valetis, ego et Tullia valemus.*" His residence at Gibraltar was costing this country upwards of £150 a month. He believed it had been said by persons whose opinions might be valuable that he was cheap at the money; if so, he learnt with regret and for the first time that, as a nation, we might do wrong provided we did it cheaply. To arrest and to detain a man unheard and untried was at any time an arbitrary act, which could only be justified by extreme necessity. Every day during which such detention was prolonged aggravated the arbitrariness of the act, and increased the degree of necessity which must be made patent to justify it. One of the securities which was claimed to appertain especially to the world at large when Mr. Gladstone was in Office was that the rights of weak and small nationalities were respected, and that the citizens of other countries would be treated with the same considerations as our own; and he challenged his noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to bring any precedent for the detention of the subject of a civilized nation without even the form of a trial or of an investigation having taken place. Arabi Pasha, though a rebel, and known to be so by overt acts committed in the presence of thousands, was honoured with the ceremonial of a State trial and assisted by English counsel. Why had not the same justice been accorded to Zebehr? It was very difficult not to believe that the reason was that proof was known to exist in the case of Arabi, and that no proof, but only suspicion and unfortunate antecedents, could be adduced against Zebehr. He hoped that their Lordships would, if need be, affirm that Zebehr Pasha's detention was contrary to the sense of their Lordships' House and to the spirit of English law. That Zebehr's detention reacted unfavourably on the present mind of the Soudan might be a conjecture on his part; but if Zebehr himself was right in tracing the general rising of the Soudan to alarm and misconception of British intentions — alarm and misconception which Zebehr thought compassed General Gordon's assassination—this detention seemed to him most unwise and impolitic. Zebehr said—he took his words down as spoken—

> "When Gordon returned to Khartoum the people of the Soudan were pleased. They knew he would not allow unjust taxes or unjust duties, or oppressed trade and poor men. Khartoum became quiet when he arrived. Many Arab sheikhs came into Khartoum to hear what was in Gordon's mind."

Now, he asked their Lordships to mark this—

> "Then came news of English and Egyptian soldiers at Suakin. The people of Khartoum began to fancy that Gordon had come to deceive them; that this time he was the servant of the

English; that he was going to keep Khartoum quiet while the English troops fought with Osman Digna. This distrust of Gordon increased when they heard that Zebehr Pasha's promised coming was no true promise. Instead, came tidings of a stranger people in arms, who were going to sweep away the Arab and his religion. The sheikhs all left Khartoum for their own people, and the Soudan rose. The rising had nothing to do with the Mahdi at first; but the rising was for the sake of religion. The Mahdi was said to be a holy man and the leader of a war of religion, and so they joined him."

What did Gordon think of the rising? Did he agree with Zebehr? He wrote—

"They never would have joined the Mahdi if Zebehr had come up."

Again—

"With Zebehr we would have beaten the Mahdi without any exterior help. The defect I laboured under has been that I presented no rallying point to the people, not being of their nation and creed."

Again—

"The Mahdi could never get the people to rise against Zebehr."

Again—and here he was evidently conscious of distrust and fear working against him in Khartoum to compass his fall—

"Zebehr would square the townspeople."

This, however, was the past. Zebehr Pasha was looked for anxiously and came not. Later came tidings that Zebehr had been carried away from Egypt by the stranger people, and no man knew whither. General Gordon called one of his steamers *Zebehr*, not because he held Zebehr in special esteem, but as a record of how often he had asked for his presence, and how closely he connected his absence with coming anarchy and disaster in the Soudan. So much for the first of his two divisions. It was for their Lordships and for the country to decide whether this state of affairs could be justified or tolerated. They could not, however, get away from the fact that Zebehr Pasha had been detained for a year at Gibraltar; and it seemed desirable to persuade their Lordships that on this ground his services might be turned to account in the Soudan, and that out of evil good might come. Zebehr had quick eyes to see, and ears to hear. The perpetual movement of troops and ships of war, the ceaseless order and battle array of life in a great fortress, the *genius loci* of a place of arms, had taught Zebehr new lessons and new notions. Now that Zebehr knew the English, now that he had seen evidences of England's power and might, of which he had not dreamed, he felt not only certain which must ever be the winning side in the East, but felt also that by identifying himself with England's cause he would be serving his own closest interests. That was Zebehr's present conviction—a conviction which seemed sincere, reared as it was on the acknowledged ruin of old and cherished prepossessions. In addition, Zebehr was truly grateful for kindness and consideration which he had not expected, and which he referred to the greatness of soul and benevolence of the English Government. In short, ascribe it as they pleased to gratitude or to cunning, or to the expectation of possible favours to come, Zebehr's desire to serve England, if only the opportunity were given him, amounted almost to zeal. Could the prisoner, then, be of no use, even at the eleventh hour? Zebehr declared that anarchy would convulse the Soudan until many real grievances were defined, many imaginary wrongs explained, and until boundaries, territories, and jurisdiction were reconstituted. Further, he declared that anarchy must convulse the Soudan so long as alarm and misconception of British interference remained unallayed. Did he see any way to a solution? Yes. He said—

"Let some wise man go who knows the English; let him tell the Arabs that war with the English people means ruin and trouble; that peace means trade up and down the Nile, the wealth of individuals, the prosperity of a nation. The Arabs are not a savage or a stupid people. They will listen to reason; but reason must speak in peace, and not in arms, for the Arab is brave."

He submitted to their Lordships whether Zebehr might not be this wise man, who might be allowed to carry out his own advice. Liberty—under residential conditions, if need be—would appear no undue reward for his good offices or success. Meanwhile — and this was a guarantee which Zebehr empowered him to offer—his wives and children should become the hostages of his fair dealing and return to Cairo. How could a peaceful mission of this kind be best carried out? He did not think Zebehr could succeed alone, even were he sent to Khartoum as the Plenipotentiary of peace and promised reforms. The English people had shed too much blood and done too much harm in Upper Egypt for the Chiefs and merchants, whom we had driven to defiance, to believe all at once and on hearsay from Khartoum that England had no designs upon their religion or their liberties and their fortunes. In mind, body, and estate the Soudan had reason to detest the very name of England for many hundreds of miles. To restore confidence by friendly words would take time, and more than one man would have to speak to do so. Zebehr thought so himself, and advised the sending of Missions to Korosko, to Dongola, and to Khartoum, the Envoys to be influential Arabs, each Envoy—and this Zebehr laid down as essential to any chance of success—to hold a Firman from the Sultan empowering and encouraging his mission of conciliation and peace. After gaining all possible information, and inviting all possible communications from the disaffected leaders and people of these several districts the Envoys would return to Cairo, make their reports, and offer suggestions as to compromises and subsidies. Subsidies would prove the soothing syrup of the Soudan. A Conference, at which England, the Porte, and the Arab subjects of the Porte must be represented, should then assemble at Cairo and consider future action and the remodelling of social and financial administration in the Egyptian Soudan Provinces. This remodelling and Conference were outside the present question; but it seemed reasonable to suppose that, whatever might be contemplated or tried later, the full Reports which would thus have been furnished by Commissions in sympathy of blood, religion, and prejudice with the people of the Soudan must be of use. Zebehr advised the sending of Hussein Khalifa Pasha to Korosko, Sir Mustapha Yur to Dongola, and, if possible, making use of the services of Abd-el-Kader Pasha. He gave distinct reasons for these selections. Now, as to Zebehr himself, he would cheerfully serve the British Government at Khartoum, and direct and inspire the purpose of the Mission; but he had no desire—a desire invariably imputed to him—to be made a ruler or to erect his own rule. He would like to go back to his own home and to his own people; the home in which his ancestry had lived for 800 years, a short day's river journey beyond Khartoum. But he knew that the days of his greatness were past, and he was now an old man. Whatever his faults might have been, his last words were sad and serious, and he wished to swear on the Koran that they were true. He should not forget his leave-taking with Zebehr, who was haggard and hopeless. Zebehr's last words were—

> "I am becoming an old man, and from now I only look forward to death; but before I die I should like to see the country of my young days quiet and peaceful, and trade up and down the Nile. I may never go back to my own country; but if this ever comes to pass by the advice I now give my people will bless and remember my name for good and for blessing. I do not wish to be made a great man. I shall have my reward and my blessing long after I am in my grave. If I can be of use, then it is well; if I cannot be of use, then it is well; but let me and my family depart from Egypt and from the Soudan. We will go to one of the holy cities—to Mecca, to Medina, or to Jerusalem—and so I will end my time."

Zebehr Pasha was the man to help us, and he was ready and wishful to do so; and under the circumstances he saw no reason to doubt his good faith, nor why he should not be allowed to make the effort. But even if we turned our backs upon Zebehr's possible assistance, as we turned our backs upon it once before, it was not a comfortable precedent. He failed to see any just or good object in keeping Zebehr a prisoner at Gibraltar. When our troops were moving up the Nile on a distinct and dangerous enterprize it was important that no details of our Forces and movements should become known. News travelled like thistledown in the East. From a military point of view it might have been expedient to deport Zebehr to Gibraltar. But the circumstances had changed. Nobody in England now wished to advance to Khartoum, or to carry on military operations in the Soudan, or to bring the Arab tribes into subjection. This was no of military expediency; it was one of our national and political equity. He appealed to his noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for an assurance of his earnest and immediate attention to this question of detention. Failing that, he should ask their Lordships to concur in the views he had expressed, and so mark their disapproval of a state of things which must be repugnant to all fair-minded Englishmen, and subsersive of the high traditions of English justice.

Moved, "That the time has come when, under certain conditions, the presence of Zebehr Pasha in the Sûdan might prove valuable in the interests of Egypt and the pacification of the Sûdan provinces."—(*The Lord Ribblesdale.*)

THE EARL OF DUNDONALD said, that the noble Lord desired to use Zebehr as a means to an end. But it was not right to use such a means as Zebehr for even so good an end, unless, indeed, he had been fearfully maligned. His antecedents were as bad as they could possibly be. He was the chief instigator of the most atrocious forms of the Slave Trade. He inaugurated caravans across the burning deserts of Africa, from which slaves who could no longer go on the journey were allowed to die upon the sands. On no condition should they allow Zebehr to put his foot again on the Soudan. It was true that General Gordon had asked that Zebehr might be sent him. General Gordon was set the almost impossible task of extricating the Egyptian garrisons. *In extremis*, and not knowing what to do, he requested that Zebehr might be sent out to him. This was the same spirit which induced Gordon to appoint the Mahdi Sultan of Kordofan. In asking for Zebehr's appointment, General Gordon said that, although his slave-dealing transactions were very bad, they were not worse than those of Ismail or of any other of the Turks. This was the gist of the whole matter—that the Turks were not worse than the great instigator and originator of the atrocious slave traffic. This country incurred a great responsibility in going to Egypt in 1882; England incurred a responsibility not only for the better government of that country, but also for the government of the Dependencies of that country; yet our first act was to give the Soudan up to barbarism, knowing that the result of the evacuation of the Soudan would be to leave the tribes fighting one with another—that which was occurring at this moment. There was only one proper policy with regard to the Soudan, and that was the manly one of recognizing our responsibilities, and that we were liable for the government of that country. What would be thought of the officials of a lunatic asylum who, when the inmates were fighting with one another, left the building and established themselves at the gate, leaving the poor creatures to fight it out? Yet that was what was happening in the Soudan. The Soudanese in their dealings with one another could not, from a civilized point of view, be regarded as much more sane than a lot of lunatics. Yet England thereupon leaves the country and lets them fight it out; but that was not in accordance with what was right and what was moral. It was the duty of Her Majesty's Government to re-organize the Soudan, not with Turkish influence, but with European influence. He felt certain that if a firm policy was carried out the Soudan before many months passed would be in better order, and in a more or less civilized state. He did not think the pacification of the Soudan would be a costly enterprize. The forts up the Nile might be occupied by a comparatively small force of Black troops with English officers, and slowly and surely they would create order where now there was chaos. He trusted that the Government would adopt this policy.

LORD FITZGERALD said, that the noble Earl, in his interesting speech, had entirely mistaken the issue before the House. He hoped the Government would not follow the noble Earl's suggestions with regard to the Soudan. The honour and character of England were concerned in this matter. With respect to Zebehr, and the severe remarks which the noble Earl had made on his character, he believed that it would be necessary to go back many years for a justification of those remarks, inasmuch as for some time prior to 1879, and from 1879 to the present time, Zebehr had been a prisoner. Zebehr Pasha was not a subject of this country, and, consequently, he could not be guilty of treason to her. He owed her no fealty, and, as against England, he had commited no offence whatever. From the statement made about 13 months ago by his noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, he gathered that Zebehr Pasha, being then a prisoner under detention by the Khedivial Government, was arrested by the Government of England on the advice of the Military Authorities of England, and that, as a matter of military necessity, he was placed on board a British ship and deported from the country. As to the question of military necessity, he had no information upon it; but he assumed it to be accurate that the Government accepted the responsibility of the Military Authorities, and accordingly detained Zebehr Pasha. A great many things which would not bear close inspection might be done under the plea of military necessity. According to the answer of the noble Earl, Zebehr Pasha was arrested with his two sons, and his papers were seized. He was conveyed to Malta, and thence to Gibraltar. Now, could we, having regard to the character of England, and according to English law, detain Zebehr Pasha in a British fortress? How did Zebehr Pasha come to be detained in Gibraltar? A few days after the answer was given by the noble Earl, the Attorney General was questioned in the House of Commons as to how it happened that Zebehr Pasha was detained as a prisoner of England. The hon. and learned Gentleman first gave an account of the state of the law in Gibraltar, stating that the laws of England extended there to be administered in the same manner as in Westminster Hall; and, finally, he told the House that Zebehr Pasha was detained under an Ordinance pronounced by the Governor of Gibraltar and his Council. Subsequently, Mr. Evelyn Ashley, being questioned further, said that about the 25th of March a communication had been made to the Governor of Gibraltar. No doubt, that communication contained the Order in Council which he published on the 30th of that month. Zebehr Pasha was then delivered into custody, and he had since been detained at Gibraltar with his two sons. He asked whether this was consistent with the Constitution of England, and with English law? He held that it was not. It was true he had not seen the Ordinance in question; but he knew what its foundation was. What was Gibraltar itself? It was very difficult to define it in contemplation of the law. It was a fortress, a town of about 20,000 people, and a small territory in the hands of the British Crown, coming from a conquest that dated about 180 years ago. Parliament might deal with a Possession of this kind as it pleased; but Parliament had never dealt with Gibraltar as far as he knew. He was not acquainted with any Act of Parliament which dealt with its Constitution or its rights. It was altogether in the hands of the Crown. It was not a Crown Colony. It was a Possession of the Crown acquired by conquest; and under such circumstances a Possession so obtained was to be governed by such law as the Crown, in virtue of its Prerogative and for the public good, might direct to be administered in that Possession, at least until Parliament intervened. He understood that the Governor in Council had the power to enact Ordinances for local purposes in Gibraltar, but that he could not issue any Ordinances which were inconsistent with the general law of England. The continuance of the detention of Zebehr Pasha, unless it were justified by military necessity, was contrary to the law of England, and without legal justification. In this case England was acting as the gaoler of the Khedivial Government. He could not see any course out of the unfortunate position we were in save by discharging this man and returning him to his country. He would suggest that Zebehr Pasha should be allowed to return to his native land; but that he should in no way be permitted to be instrumental in the reconquest of the Soudan by the Khedive's Government. A just recompense dependent on his future good conduct should also be given him.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of Rosebery): I think it will be convenient, after the interesting speeches to which we have just listened, that I should lose no time in declaring the views of the Government on the two-headed Motion of my noble Friend. In the first place, I have to congratulate Zebehr Pasha on his advocates, and to say that I am sure no one here who listened to the interesting speech of my noble Friend will fail to hope that, now he is released from the anxieties of Office, he will often contribute to our debates. I cannot congratulate him so much on having led a very united army to assail Her Majesty's Government on this question. The noble Earl who appeared to take the position of seconding the Motion spoke of Zebehr Pasha in terms which can hardly have commended themselves to the notice of my noble Friend; and he proceeded to lay down a doctrine which must have been, I think, in the highest degree repugnant to those who held in Parliament last year, and the year before, that it was the duty of the Government at once to undertake the

European occupation and control of the Soudan. That is a question on which I have no ground for troubling your Lordships on this occasion. But I think my noble Friend (the Earl of Dundonald) will find that if he brings that proposal to a practical issue, it will meet with scanty meed of support in this House. The second follower of my noble Friend was the noble and learned Lord who has just sat down, who gave away the whole case, in spite of his interesting and learned argument, when he said that such a state of things could be justified by military necessity, and that if Her Majesty's Government assured him that such military necessity existed he was prepared to accept such an assurance. After having thus swept away the whole groundwork of his fortifications, it was of little use to detain us with an interesting and learned dissertation as to the Prerogative of the Crown in the fortress of Gibraltar; because if I, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, am prepared to assert that a military necessity does exist, his whole argument falls to the ground. The Motion of my noble Friend resolves itself, as he has truly said, into two parts. As to the first part, I readily concede he has a strong *primâ facie* case; and as to the second, I submit he has no case at all. The first issue raised by my noble Friend is this—that we should not detain Zebehr Pasha any longer in captivity. I readily admit that nothing could be more distasteful to any British Government, from whichever side of the House it may be formed, than to be obliged to detain a man, even if he could justify the character given to him by the noble Earl, a moment longer in confinement than necessary, more especially under the circumstances—what I may call the unconstitutional circumstances—which have been so happily described by the noble and learned Lord. But we have to consider facts as they exist. The noble and learned Lord said that Zebehr Pasha was detained under the order of the Khedivial Government, and that they ought to have his custody. As a matter of fact that is not the case, because the arrest of Zebehr Pasha was ordered as a military necessity by the British Authorities. In arguing this case we must come to the root of the matter. You are dealing with an extraordinary and exceptional state of things, caused by our occupation of a country of which we have not the sovereignty, of which we have not the nominal protectorate, but of which we are in military occupation; and we have to face a dark and unknown quantity of danger in the hostile tribes of the Soudan. Let not my noble Friend think for one moment that the Government is more indifferent to the personal safety of the humblest of human beings than was the last Government, or the one that preceded it. We took into our consideration almost as soon as we got into Office the question whether it would be necessary to detain Zebehr Pasha any longer. There was one little item which my noble Friend touched on lightly, of £150 a-month for his detention, which would at once occupy the unfailing vigilance of the British Treasury, even if no other argument had made itself heard. But, my Lords, on the large grounds of justice and Constitutional law, we have endeavoured, by consultation with the authorities both in Egypt and at the War Office, to ascertain if we could safely, in the present state of things, release Zebehr Pasha from custody; and I venture to say that no appeals were ever made in a more anxious spirit to receive an affirmative reply than those made by me. What is the result? From both of these authorities we received the unanimous response that it is not safe at present to release Zebehr Pasha. I am inclined to think that this would be almost the worst moment of any moment since he was first taken to release that prisoner. And why? At this moment Her Majesty's Government are occupying and devising a new regulation and arrangement of the frontier of Egypt. It is not three or four months since the forces of the Queen were engaged in fighting these very wild tribes of the Soudan, with whom it has been known as an absolute fact that Zebehr was in direct and definite communication. When we were occupied in the task of concentration and withdrawal on the Egyptian Frontier—a task which may, for aught we know, bear a false interpretation among the wild tribes of the Soudan—would it be wise to release from custody and restore to Egypt a man who has exercised a great power for both evil and for good, and even a fascination over my noble Friend himself? He had ready and direct methods of communication with these tribes, and he might exercise these powers of communication very greatly to the detriment of our position in Egypt. Therefore, I say we should not be justified in taking the course which has been suggested to us this evening. It would be an act of carelessness on our part—criminal carelessness—to release Zebehr Pasha at the present moment. My noble Friend told us that news in the Soudan travels like thistle-down, and the news that Zebehr Pasha had been restored to Egypt would travel as fast as other news. We cannot tell what effect it would have; but having Zebehr at Gibraltar we know this—that until we have made the frontier of Egypt to some extent secure, we have no right to release this potent power for good or evil. My noble Friend said that Zebehr Pasha was a family man, and was impressed with the strength of Gibraltar. The strength of Gibraltar is something which may impress anyone; but Zebehr Pasha is a shrewd man, and he knows that Gibraltar is some distance from the Soudan. He knows exactly the measure of our influence in the Soudan. He has known of that unfortunate and heroic campaign we carried on there; and, putting all these things together, I doubt whether that astute Oriental will be disposed to consider the influence of Gibraltar, or the power of England as shown there, as influencing very greatly the course of events in the Soudan. Again, Zebehr Pasha knows the character of this Government very well—of English Governments very well. He knows that if he gave us his whole family as hostages, and bound himself by the oath, which he was ready to take, that they might be put to death in case he broke that oath, that no matter what he did, not a single hair of their heads would be touched. At a moment of singular crisis in the history of Egypt we are asked to release one who may have affected my noble Friend by his parting words and vivid conversation, but who, at the same time, has been an agent of infinite cruelty and infinite destruction among the wild tribes of the Soudan. We are left in Egypt at this moment as a sort of garrison dealing with an obscure danger. We cannot tell where or when it may fall; and we are asked at this moment, dwelling as we do, if not in a powder magazine, at least on the outskirts of one, to return this highly inflammatory agent right into the centre of this highly perilous matter existing on our frontier. I am afraid I cannot argue this case constitutionally. I admit there is no Constitutional argument I know of to be raised for detaining Zebehr Pasha; but there are in Egypt at this moment considerations which overrule all other considerations. If we remember the course of events that have occurred in the Soudan, we shall not be very willing to strain a point in order to create again a state of things such as that which caused such infinite disaster and distress in this country last year. That is the case as regards the first part of my noble Friend's Motion; but I would wish to add that I give my promise, on behalf of the Government, that this question shall be reconsidered with the utmost anxiety to release this old man. Whether he goes to those holy cities which have been mentioned, or whether he returns to Egypt, the question will be reconsidered with the utmost wish to release him at the very earliest moment which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, it will be possible to do so. Now, I come to the second part of the Motion, and in discussing it I think I have a less troublesome task to perform. My noble Friend suggests that the time has come when, under certain conditions, the presence of Zebehr Pasha in the Soudan might prove valuable in the interests of Egypt, and in the pacification of the Soudan Provinces. To that proposition I have to return, on the part of the Government, a most direct and unhesitating negative. I cannot conceive, more especially after listening to the speech of my noble Friend, what considerations could have led any reasonable man to the conclusion embodied in the second part of his Motion. I think, after the experience we have had, the English Parliament and the English people, and the English Government as representing them, would think very seriously before sending any Agent whatsoever to the Soudan; because whatever stipulations we might enter into we could not well dissociate ourselves from responsibility for the actions of such an Agent. We have a great deal in the memory of the past to enlighten us as to the wisdom of sending even the greatest and the best of men to the Soudan as our Agents. We are dealing there, as I have already said, with an unknown quantity, and it was a difficult and a dangerous thing for us to attempt to send anyone there as our Agent. I cannot understand, unless we wish to re-occupy the Soudan, why we should send any Agent there at all. But when the Government are asked not only to send out an Agent there, but to send Zebehr Pasha there as that Agent, I confess I fail to see the wisdom of, or even the reason for, the proposal that we should adopt such a course. It will be in the recollection of your Lordships that on the request of that great and good man we lost at Khartoum we declined to send Zebehr Pasha to act in the Soudan even under his influence and control. That was done by the Government of the day after mature deliberation, but also under the strong constraining of the House of Commons and of the country. And why was it that both the House of Commons and the country were opposed to that step being taken? It was because the past history of Zebehr Pasha did not encourage, but on the contrary discouraged, the belief that he would be a fit instrument to act as the Agent of this country in the Soudan. If the Government were unable to send out Zebehr Pasha to act as the Agent of this country under the direct control and influence of General Gordon, much less can we think of sending him to act as our Agent without his being under such control and influence. At the best Zebehr Pasha would be but a doubtful Agent for us to send, and even if he were the best I am unable to understand what useful work he could do in the Soudan. We do not wish to govern or to reconquer the Soudan; and, even if we did desire to govern or to reconquer the Soudon, I do not see how our sending Zebehr Pasha into those Provinces under the most favourable conditions would materially aid us in carrying our object into effect. If I may say the truth, I feel great difficulty in arguing this matter, because I have failed to appreciate the force of any argument which the noble Lord has put forward in support of his proposition. The noble Lord supported his Motion by considerations drawn from conversations he had had with Zebehr, and the pathetic appeal that that personage addressed to him as to his great age, the failure of his ambition, and his anxiety to end his days at Mecca. These are hardly the pledges or guarantees which we should desire from a man of his antecedents going to represent the British Government in the Soudan. In conclusion, I must say, in reply to the noble Lord's Motion, that the Government have no wish to send out an Agent to the Soudan, and that if they had Zebehr Pasha would not be the man they would choose.

On Question? *Resolved* in the *negative.*

IRELAND.

PETITION PRESENTED.

The Earl of COURTOWN, in presenting a Petition from the General Synod of the Church of Ireland against any measure which should endanger the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, said, the General Synod represented many thousands of the people of Ireland, and especially the more cultivated and professional class. No doubt the greater number were to be found in the Northern Province; but they were also to be found largely distributed over the Southern and Western portion of the country, and at least 100,000 resided in the diocese of the Archbishop of Dublin. They were of every rank and class, and might include the majority of those who formed the first rank in education, property, and professional eminence. The General Synod represented this vast population in the strictest sense. It was this Body which, in answer to the invitation which the Prime Minister had issued to all parties in Ireland to express their views upon the subject of Home Rule, and at the request of numerous members of the Church, was convened by the Archbishop of Dublin in order to take counsel together in this grave crisis in the history of the country, especially having regard to its effect on the Church of Ireland. Their Lordships should recollect that the members of that Church had made great sacrifices, personal and pecuniary, in providing funds for the sustentation of the churches in Ireland under the new condition of things consequent upon the Act for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. The Synod was very largely attended, and the opinions of those present were well expressed in the words of one of the laity, who said—

> "It was their undoubted right—nay, it was their bounden duty as Churchmen—to make the voice of their Church heard in defence of her liberties."

No doubt in this matter they were to have guarantees offered; but they could not forget certain events in connection with James II. and the rebellions of 1642 and 1798. Without going into history at length, he might add that they could not forget the guarantees contained in the Act of Union, and solemn promises made at the time of Catholic Emancipation. The whole question was thoroughly considered by the Synod, who had embodied their views in the Petition which he presented, and which he moved should be read by the Clerk at the Table.

Moved, "That the said Petition be read by the Clerk."—(*The Earl of Courtown.*)

Motion *agreed to:* Petition read accordingly, and ordered to lie on the Table.

COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES BILL.

(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

(NO. 50.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE PAYMASTER GENERAL (Lord THURLOW), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that its motive was merely to provide for compensating those who had sustained serious damages in the unfortunate riots of the 8th of February. There had been a very wide expression of feeling that these persons could not be permitted to suffer such grievous losses if any fund could be found to exist from which they could receive compensation. The result had proved that no such fund existed; and the Government had, therefore, introduced this Bill into the other House of Parliament in order to provide compensation out of the Metropolitan rates. Under the circumstances he did not think that it was necessary to speak at any length upon the Bill; and, in conclusion, he begged to move that it be now read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at Six o'clock, till
To-morrow, a quarter past
Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 5th April, 1886.

MINUTES.]—NEW MEMBER SWORN—The Right honble. James Stansfeld, *for* Halifax.

SELECT COMMITTEE — Endowed Schools, Mr. Cremer *added.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered — First Reading* — Medical Act (1858) Amendment * [163].

Second Reading—Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment [161].

Committee—Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) [118] [*Third Night*]—R.P.; Infants [139] — R.P.; Police Forces Enfranchisement [3]—R.P.

Committee — Report — Poor Relief (Ireland) * [155].

Committee—Report—Third Reading—Cape Race Lighthouse [152], and *passed.*

Third Reading—Prison Officers' Superannuation * [154]; Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) [74], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—TEMPLEPORT, CO. CAVAN.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, How many ejectment decrees were executed by Mr. Townley, sub-sheriff of Cavan, in the parish of Templeport, during the months of February and March 1886; what was the total amount of rent due by the tenants who were evicted; what was the total cost incurred by the Government (such as car hire and extra pay to police, &c.) in carrying out these evictions; and, would it not have been cheaper for the Government to have paid the amount of decrees?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Twenty-eight decrees were executed in this parish in the period stated. The total amount of rent due was £261 11*s.*, and the total cost incurred in carrying out the evictions was about double that amount.

Mr. BIGGAR: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the second part of the Question.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: Well, Sir; I have heard of schemes for making the Government into the landlord; but I am not aware of any scheme for making the Government the tenant.

MEDICAL CHARITIES (IRELAND) ACT —DISPENSARY DISTRICTS—THE ISLANDS OF CLARE AND TURK.

Mr. DEASY (Mayo, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Westport Board of Guardians have passed a resolution requesting the Local Government Board to constitute the Islands of Clare and Turk a separate Dispensary District, on account of the distance between them and the mainland; and, whether the Local Government Board will accede to the wishes of the Guardians?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Local Government Board are quite willing to authorize the employment of an additional medical officer for this dispensary district, who shall reside on Clare Island; but having regard to the heavy charge involved, they are not prepared to constitute the two Islands of Clare and Turk a separate dispensary district. The course the Board propose would add very little to the existing charges.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—CO. ARMAGH.

Mr. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Lord Chancellor of Ireland will appoint a number of Catholic gentlemen to the Commission of the Peace in county Armagh, in proportion to the Catholic population which that county contains, and without waiting for the recommendation of the Earl of Gosford or the Deputy Lieutenants of the county Armagh?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Lord Chancellor cannot undertake to make appointments to the Commission of the Peace without previous reference to the Lord Lieutenant of the county; but he does not make it a *sine quâ non* that the Lord Lieutenant of the county should recommend in every case.

Mr. BLANE: Would the refusal of the Lord Lieutenant of the county be a bar to an appointment by the Lord Chancellor?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: No, Sir. Certainly it would not be a bar.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—THE MASTER OF THE WORKHOUSE, CAVAN UNION.

Mr. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Master of the Cavan Union Workhouse uses a portion of the garden attached for the purpose of raising strawberries, which are annually presented to the gentry and nobility of the county; whether, for the preservation of the strawberries from the paupers, the yard gate is kept locked during a great part of the year; whether the Master of the Cavan Union despatches the carpenter of the Union to superintend the burials of those who die in the Union; and, whether the Local Government Board of Ireland will order a sworn inquiry?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It appears that the Guardians allow the master a plot of land for a garden, on part of which he has planted strawberries; but I am given to understand that he does not make presents of fruit to the nobility and gentry of the district. The gate referred to is kept locked to preserve classification amongst the inmates, and to prevent them wandering over the country. The gardener does occasionally attend burials in the workhouse. He is the only other resident officer besides the master, and it is thought necessary that some responsible person should be present. There does not appear to be any reason for a sworn inquiry.

THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—PUBLIC CHARITIES AT BAMPTON.

Mr. F. W. MACLEAN (Oxford, Woodstock) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, If he could explain why the income of certain property, assured by two deeds, dated the 30th October 1682 and the 28th February 1786, for the benefit of the poor of Bampton, in Oxfordshire, has remained undistributed and unadministered since the year 1868; why, notwithstanding local inquiries held by the

Charity Commissioners at Bampton in 1868 and 1878, relative to such charities, and numerous applications to such Commissioners, nothing whatever has been done in the matter; why such income has been allowed to accumulate for so many years, and whether it now amounts to a considerable sum; whether he is aware that great dissatisfaction exists among the poor and inhabitants generally of Bampton at the delay of the Commissioners in the matter, and what is the reason of such delay; and, whether any, and what, steps can be taken to cause the Commissioners to settle a scheme for the immediate administration and distribution of such income and its accumulations, and the administration of the funds of the charity generally?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): (1.) The income has remained undistributed because the Trustees have taken upon themselves to withhold the distribution in consequence of administrative difficulties which they conceived to exist. (2.) The failure to establish a scheme was due to the refusal of the Commissioners to permit the application of the funds of these Charities to the support of the national school. (3.) The accumulation is due to the cause mentioned in the first part of the answer. It consisted in December, 1885, of a sum of £394 1*s.* 9*d.* Consols held by the Official Trustees, and of a sum of cash amounting to £64 15*s.* standing to the credit of the Trustees with their bankers. (4.) The Commissioners received a Memorial from the inhabitants of Bampton in the year 1882; but it is only in the course of the present year that they received such an application from the Trustees as would enable them to proceed with a complete scheme. (5.) A scheme is now in course of preparation, and pending its establishment the Trustees have been advised to make a distribution from the funds in their hands.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT—STATION AT ROSSLEA.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is true that a weekly market, a monthly fair, and Petty Sessions, are held at Rosslea; if it is a polling station; and, if so, whether the Postmaster General could, having regard to the populousness of the district, see his way to establish a telegraph office there without a guarantee?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The question whether a telegraph office can be established in any place is governed solely by the amount of telegraphic business likely to be transacted. If it is estimated that the revenue for telegraph messages will not cover the expenses, the Postmaster General has no power to establish the office except under guarantee. According to the best estimate which can be formed of the amount of business likely to be done at Rosslea the revenue would fall short of the expenses; and the case is, therefore, one in which the Postmaster General must ask for a guarantee. I have no doubt the statements in the first paragraph of the Question are correct.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—HOWTH HARBOUR.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If he could state what is the greatest depth of water at the entrance of Howth Harbour at low tide; what would be the cost of dredging the Harbour, so as to make it possible for fishing boats to enter or leave it at all times; how are the tolls expended which are at present collected at Howth from the owners of boats; and, in consequence of the fluctuating nature of the herring fishery, and its possible revival at Howth at an early date, what provision does the Government intend to make for the accommodation of a large fishing fleet in that Harbour in such an eventuality?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The greatest and average depths between the pier heads at the entrance to Howth Harbour are 7 feet 9 inches and 7 feet respectively at low water of ordinary spring tides, and about one foot less at very low tides. The cost of dredging the harbour would depend on the area to be dredged. If the area were the same as in 1865 it would be about £5,000. The tolls are applied to the maintenance of the harbour. For the last five years they have averaged one-twelfth of the annual expenditure. The average amount of tolls is £187, and the average expenditure £2,279.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked whether the Secretary to the Treasury would inquire into the manner in which the Board of Works had been grossly mis-spending the money on the harbour?

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: I will be quite ready to institute every inquiry if the hon. and learned Member will indicate the particular points.

Mr. CLANCY said, that in consequence of the unsatisfactory answer of the Secretary to the Treasury he would call attention on the Estimates to the disgraceful mismanagement of this harbour by the Board of Works.

INDIA (BOMBAY) — MR. P. H. CAMA'S HOSPITAL.

Sir W. GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is not the case that, about two years ago, Mr. P. H. Cama, a Parsee gentleman, offered a sum of Rs.1,00,000 for a hospital for women and children to the Government of Bombay, on the condition that the hospital should bear his name; that the Government of Bombay refused to accept Mr. Cama's offer unless he defrayed the estimated full cost of the building, amounting to Rs. 1,67,000 which amount Mr. Cama paid; whether it is not the case that, very recently, the Government of Bombay have accepted an offer of Rs.1,00,000, for a similar purpose, from Mr. Veerjeevundas Madowdas, a Hindoo gentleman, and are about to supplement it by Rs.1,50,000 from the public funds; and, whether he is aware that the action of the Government of Bombay, in this instance, has given rise to much dissatisfaction among the Parsee community?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) (Lancashire, Clitheroe): No information has been received at the India Office relative to Mr. Veerjeevundas's hospital; but inquiry can be made, if the hon. Gentleman desires it. As regards Mr. Cama's hospital, I learn that that gentleman offered one lakh of rupees towards its erection, upon condition that the Government of Bombay should bear the remainder of the cost. The Government granted a site worth 2¾ lakhs, equivalent to £20,625; but was unable to contribute more than this from the public Revenue. Mr. Cama approved the site, thanked the Government for their liberality, and then with great munificence himself contributed the additional sum required—namely, Rs.20,000, and subsequently a further sum of Rs.44,311 towards certain improvements.

POST OFFICE—THE POSTAL UNION.

Mr. HUTTON (Manchester, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, in consideration of the annual loss to the Post Office on the cost of ocean transit of mails to British Colonies and possessions in India, What amount is received by the Government from each of the Foreign Countries in the Postal Union towards the expenses of carrying by British mail steamers the letters of residents in those Foreign Countries, who pay their Government only twopence halfpenny on letters weighing half an ounce, it being borne in mind that, for the same weight of letters, residents in Great Britain pay four pence to British Colonies, and five pence to British possessions, in India?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): For the sea transit of letters from the Union Countries, where a postage rate of only 2½*d.* per half-ounce is charged to British Colonies included in the 4*d.* and 5*d.* rate of British postage a uniform payment of 15f. per kilogramme, or about 1½*d.* per single half-ounce letter, is received by this country. The annual amount thus received, including the payment for printed papers, &c., which is at 1f. per kilogramme, is estimated at £3,000, which is made up thus—France, £1,600; Germany, £550; Belgium, £50; Egypt, £250; United States, £550 — total, £3,000. There are a few smaller countries which charge a postage of 2½*d.* to their public; but their contributions are paid through the countries named above, and cannot be given separately.

POST OFFICE — REMUNERATION OF RURAL POSTMEN.

Mr. DEASY (Mayo, W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If he will state what is the maximum and minimum scale of remuneration of rural postmen in England and Ireland respectively?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The wages of rural postmen in England and Ireland are regulated generally according to the rate of operative wages in each district. Thus, in some parts of England, Scotland, and also of Ireland, rural postmen are paid wages of 17*s.* to 18*s.* a-week. In other parts the postmen's wages vary according to the cost of labour, 12*s.* a-week being the minimum payment in England and 10*s.* in Ireland.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL—RAILWAY PASSENGERS.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he will introduce into the Railway Traffic Bill provisions giving the same protection and regulation in regard to passengers that he proposes to give in regard to goods, so that there may be a competent authority to entertain complaints of the travelling public, and to protect them against excessive charges, undue preference, unequal charges to different localities, want of through rates and through trains on connecting lines, habitual unpunctuality of running, want of warming and other reasonable comforts, and other ills common on those lines where there is a monopoly and no free competition?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1854, and the Regulation of Railways Act of 1873, contain provisions for preventing undue preference and enforcing through facilities in respect of passengers as well as of goods, and the jurisdiction of the Railway Commissioners to enforce these provisions will be enlarged and strengthened by the present Bill. With regard to the other matters mentioned by the hon. Member, it has not been thought desirable to encumber the Bill with provisions which, however important, would raise fresh subjects of discussion. Of course, it is open for my hon. Friend to move Amendments in Committee.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL gave Notice that on the second reading of the Bill he would, considering that the passengers had been more numerous and important than the traders, for whom so much consideration had been shown, move—

> "That it be an Instruction to the Commissioners to make additional provision for the protection of passengers also."

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) — EXCESSIVE SENTENCE — CASE OF SARAH ANN BLACKMORE, DULVERTON, SOMERSETSHIRE.

Mr. L. L. COHEN (Paddington, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the following case, reported to have occurred at Dulverton, West Somerset, last week:—

> "A woman named Sarah Ann Blackmore, aged thirty-four, was charged before Messrs. J. A. and C. R. Locke with stealing turnips valued at fourpence, the property of Mrs. Hannah Fisher, butcher, of Dulverton. The woman, who was stated to be in want, was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour;"

and, whether, if the circumstances are correctly reported, he will take steps with a view to the mitigation of the sentence?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.), in reply, said, he had considered the case referred to by the hon. Member, and that he felt justified, under the circumstances, in advising a remission of the sentence by 11 months; so that she would be discharged on Thursday next.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—COLONEL LLOYD, CLERK OF THE PEACE, CO. MONAGHAN.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, if the Government consider that Colonel Lloyd, J.P., Clerk of the Peace for county Monaghan, can only be dismissed by Quarter Sessions, they mean to take any steps to give effect to their views regarding him before that tribunal, since there is an appeal to the Queen's Bench; is it intended to allow him to retain the Commission of the Peace; is the Government aware that, though debarred by his clerkship from acting as magistrate, Colonel Lloyd continues to act as ex-officio guardian by virtue of his commission, and is now chairman of the Monaghan Union; have the Local Government Board held that, while Colonel Lloyd admittedly is incapable of acting as magistrate, he may as such rightfully be an ex-officio guardian, though his commission is suspended; is it the fact that in the analogous case of sheriffs who are divested of the Commission of the Peace during their year of office, their right to act as ex-officio guardians has also been considered suspended; and, can he say who paid the official shorthand writer in Shaw *v.* Lloyd, since it appears his notes of the trial are not public property?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Anybody who may allege an act of misconduct on the part of Colonel Lloyd can bring his case before the Quarter Sessions. It has been decided in the case of Colonel Lloyd himself in the Irish Courts that his Commission of the Peace was not, and is not, vacated or suspended by his appointment as the Clerk of the Peace. The Local Government Board have been advised, under these circumstances, that he is capable of acting as an *ex officio* Guardian. A Sheriff is by Act of Parliament prevented from acting as Justice of the Peace during his shrievalty, and therefore as *ex officio* Guardian. The shorthand writer was employed by the parties by arrangement for their own purposes, and Colonel Lloyd would, in the result, have to pay his charges.

LAND COMMISSION COURT—THE RENTAL OF IRELAND.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) (for Mr. SEXTON) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What amount of the rental of Ireland has been dealt with by the Land Commission Courts, the County Courts, and by agreements out of Court respectively under the Land Act of 1881; what, in each of the three classes, was the gross amount of the old rent, the Poor Law valuation, and the judicial rent; and, what amount of the agricultural rental of Ireland has not been dealt with by the Land Commission Courts or the County Courts, or by agreements out of Court, confirmed as prescribed by the Land Act?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Speaking in round numbers, I find that down to the end of February last nearly £3,200,000 of the old rental of Ireland, with a Poor Law valuation of £2,400,000, had been dealt with under the Land Act, the judicial rent being £2,600,000. Nearly £3,000,000 of this was dealt with by the Land Commission Court, the remainder falling to the County Courts. In both cases the amount of the rents fixed by the Court and by agreements out of Court is nearly the same—that is, half and half. There are no means, that the Government are aware of, of knowing the exact agricultural rental of Ireland; but at the time of the passing of the Land Act it was estimated by a competent authority that 300,000 tenants might avail themselves of its provisions, and that 250,000 probably would do so. At the date I have mentioned 208,000 applications had been disposed of, and over 4,000 were pending. I shall be glad to give the hon. Gentleman a Return of the exact figures if he asks it.

POOR LAW (IRELAND) — ELECTION OF GUARDIANS — MOUNTMELLICK UNION—MATTHEW S. CASSAN, SHEFFIELD, QUEEN'S CO.

MR. LALOR (Queen's Co., Leix) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is a fact that so far back as the 1st day of July, 1873, Matthew S. Cassan, of Sheffield, in the Queen's County, swore that he had no claim whatever to the estate of his wife, Phœbe Cassan, of Sheffield; if it is a fact that the said Matthew S. Cassan has lately sworn that his wife, the said Phœbe Cassan, died on the 27th of January 1886, and that a suit is pending in the Courts to determine who is the legal owner; is it a fact that on or before the 20th February last, the said Matthew S. Cassan lodged with the clerk of the Mountmellick Board of Guardians a claim to vote at the election of a guardian for the Kylecolemanban Division of said Union as owner and occupier of the said estate; is it a fact that the said Matthew S. Cassan did vote at the said election on the 19th instant, both as owner and occupier of the said estate; did his votes have the effect of returning Joseph Cassan as Guardian for the said Division, in the place of Edward Cooke, the late Guardian; and if, under these circumstances, the return of Mr. Joseph Cassan as Guardian for the said Union is legal; and, if the said election be not legal, will he take steps to prevent the said Joseph Cassan from exercising the functions of Guardian until the legality of Matthew S. Cassan's votes are tested?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The

Local Government Board have no knowledge of what Mr. M. Cassan might have sworn in 1873; but they have documents before them that he was *primâ facie* properly allowed to vote at the Poor Law elections, and no objection to the return made has been lodged with them. If any objection was lodged it would be the duty of the Board, of course, to investigate it; but, in the meantime, they have no power to prevent the gentleman who has been returned from exercising his function as Guardian.

ADMIRALTY—PLUMBERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY.

Colonel HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If he will take into consideration the case of the plumbers of the Royal Navy with a view to increasing their pay, raising their position, and granting them the privilege of wearing a uniform similar to that worn by other grades of mechanics in the Royal Navy?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): There is no present intention of reconsidering the position of plumbers in the Navy. So far as pay is concerned, we have no difficulty in getting the men we require at the present rates; and with regard to uniform, plumbers are in precisely the same position as armourers, blacksmiths, coopers, and others. Special uniforms are restricted, among artificers, to chief petty officers and skilled carpenters' mates and shipwrights. No concession could be made in the case of plumbers without giving rise to other claims, and it is considered very desirable to prevent this.

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—KEW GARDENS—EXTENSION OF HOURS OF OPENING TO THE PUBLIC.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the honourable Member for North-West Staffordshire, Whether he will inquire as to the hours of opening Kew Gardens, with a view to an earlier hour being fixed for the summer months?

The LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. Leveson Gower) (Stafford, N.W.): As much concession has been made in the matter of opening Kew Gardens as early to the public as was possible without interfering with the scientific character of the gardens and materially increasing the expense of police, I cannot hold out any hopes of further alteration in this respect.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—DR. HENRY, EX-J.P., CO. TYRONE.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the attention of Lord Ashbourne, as Lord Chancellor of Ireland, was called to the fact that for many years Dr. Robert Henry, J.P. county Tyrone, was honorary treasurer of Pomeroy Loan Fund; whether statutable declarations were made by several persons, charging Dr. Henry with having, as such treasurer, received from them instalments of certain loans without taking steps to have these repayments credited in the Loan Fund books; whether these statutable declarations were considered by Lord Ashbourne or by the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland; and, what course does the Lord Chancellor intend taking in the matter?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Owing to the change of Government pending at the time, Lord Ashbourne was unable to consider the case, and it came before the present Lord Chancellor. He called upon Dr. Henry for an explanation. Not being satisfied with this explanation the Lord Chancellor thought it necessary to request Dr. Henry to send in his resignation of the Commission of the Peace, and Dr. Henry has done so.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Can the right hon. Gentleman inform the House upon whose recommendation this defaulting person was appointed by the Tories to the Commission of the Peace?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I cannot answer that Question.

STATE-AIDED OR DIRECTED EMIGRATION.

Mr. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether, considering the present condition of trade and agriculture in this Country, the rapidly increasing population, and the large numbers of our unemployed, the Board of Trade or Her Majesty's Government can take into their consideration the formation in the State of a permanent Emigration

Department, under the management of a responsible Minister, in order to promote, aid, and direct the voluntary emigration of suitable classes of persons to our Colonies; whether he can state or obtain the views and wishes of our various Colonial Governments on this subject; and, generally, whether Her Majesty's Government are prepared in any way to entertain and develop any scheme of State-aided or State-directed emigration?

Mr. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) drew attention to the fact that emigration agents in this country refused to give assisted passages to families any member of which had received parochial relief in any form in the course of the year; and asked, Whether Her Majesty's Government would endeavour to get this harsh and impolitic practice altered?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Osborne Morgan) (Denbighshire, E.): I must ask for Notice of the last Question. In reply to the hon. Member whose Question is on the Paper, I have to say that various schemes have been submitted to the Colonial Office since the commencement of last year in relation to State-aided or State-directed emigration, notably that of the National Association for the Promotion of State-directed Emigration, which, on the 2nd of March, was communicated by Earl Granville to the Treasury and to the Local Government Board, as the Department best qualified to deal with any scheme of State-directed emigration for the alleviation of distress among the working classes. With the concurrence of that Board Earl Granville, on the 20th of March, addressed a Circular Letter to the High Commissioner for Canada and the Agents General of the Australasian Colonies, inquiring how far their respective Governments might be prepared to receive suitable immigrants early in the current year if satisfactory financial arrangements, with a view thereto, were made by Her Majesty's Government? Replies have been received from most of these gentlemen, which are now under consideration, and, with the other Papers, will be presented to Parliament at an early date. Meanwhile, Her Majesty's Government are making arrangements for the establishment of an "Emigrants' Information Bureau" in connection with the Colonial Office where intending emigrants may obtain full and trustworthy information as to the state of the labour market in the various Colonies, and other particulars which it is desirable, and, indeed, indispensable, that emigrants should possess before finally making up their minds as to their choice of a Colony. The Correspondence to which I have referred is in type, and will very shortly be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

SOUTH AFRICA—ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN STELLALAND.

Mr. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether his attention has been called to a letter signed "G. D. Smith, President of the late Bestuur, Stellaland," which states that a public petition, drawn up and adopted by a large proportion of the inhabitants of Stellaland, including the members of the late Bestuur, was seized by the police on the 23rd January 1886; that several of those who signed were arrested, tried without any opportunity of providing defence, and, although the evidence was altogether in favour of the accused, condemned to one year's imprisonment, in default of finding sureties of £2,000 each; that there is no appeal in Stellaland, except to the Judge who, as Administrator in this case, passed sentence in the first instance, and after to the Privy Council in England; and, whether these allegations are founded on fact, or justified by what has actually occurred; and, should this be so, whether Her Majesty's Government have taken steps to remedy the evils complained of?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Osborne Morgan) (Denbighshire, E.): My attention has been called to the letter alluded to, which, however, contains several inaccuracies. The public Petition which is there stated to have been seized by the police was forwarded through the Administrator, Mr. Shippard, to Sir Hercules Robinson, who dealt with it in an exhaustive and very conciliatory reply. Certain persons concerned in promoting the Petition, including Mr. G. D. Smith, were brought before Mr. Shippard in his capacity as Chief Magistrate, and he came to the conclusion that the agitation which they were fomenting by their conduct was calculated to incite to a breach of the peace; and he, therefore, directed that they should give security, themselves in £1,000 and two securities in £500 each, for their good behaviour. The securities were completed the same evening before the Resident Magistrate. The accused persons called witnesses, and had the assistance of a professional advocate. The Administrator reports that the proceeding before him was not a trial properly so-called at all, and that he passed no sentence. Under these circumstances, I do not see how any question of appeal could arise; but no doubt it is the fact that an appeal from the Chief Magistrate of Bechuanaland does lie direct to the Privy Council in this country. Under the circumstances, as I have explained them, Her Majesty's Government do not feel themselves called upon to take any action in the matter.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER — HOUSE OF COMMONS — KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS—THE TARIFF.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chairman of the Kitchen Committtee, Whether he is aware that in some important particulars the prices are higher in the dining rooms than they were last Session; and, whether the Committee over which he presides will make an effort to have prices brought into conformity with the present prices of meat?

The CHAIRMAN (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): This is not a very easy Question for me to answer; because if I were to give it a categorical denial it would not be courteous to the hon. Member, whereas the House might object to my going fully into the matter in answer to a Question. I do not admit that, in any important particular, the prices are higher than last Session; but there is an extra charge for table-money, for this reason. In the last Parliament there was a *table d'hôte* dinner at 5*s*., with no charge for table-money. At the commencement of this Session some of the new Members desired a change of the system; and the contractor, wishing to comply with their request, agreed to supply joints at fixed charges, thereby subjecting them to table-money. I think, therefore, that is the charge to which the hon. Member refers. As to the latter part of the Question, the hon. Member is aware of the great difficulty which the contractor has to meet in the uncertainty of the demand; and I am of opinion, and the Committee generally are of opinion, that we cannot reasonably expect any considerable reduction in prices; but with regard to one or two small matters they are under consideration.

Mr. BIGGAR: I beg to give Notice, Sir, that I will move for a Select Committee to inquire into the whole subject.

METROPOLIS—THE DUKE OF YORK'S COLUMN.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, in order to prevent further risk of accident, the Government are prepared to take charge of the Duke of York's Column and the moneys belonging thereto?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Duke of York's Column was built by a Committee of gentlemen, between the years 1831 and 1834, out of monies raised by a public subscription. It was built upon part of the site of Carlton House, which was pulled down about 58 years ago. After the removal of the house the greater portion of the site was laid out for building, and the remainder was thrown into St. James's Park. The steps leading up to the Column, and the greater part of the base of the structure, are within the Park. Until a few years ago there was a keeper, who admitted persons to ascend the Column through a door on the Park side, which has now become dilapidated. The keeper no longer exists, and the Column is closed to the public; and when the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Assheton Cross) was at the Home Office it was found that the steps were practically impassable, owing to the accumulation of *débris*. There is in Messrs. Cox's hands a sum of money, believed to be between £2,000 and £3,000, representing the balance of the funds subscribed for the erection of the Column; and possibly part of the money received as admission fees; but since the death of the last survivor of the original subscribers nobody appears to have any authority over it. The question what public body should have charge of the Column will require to be decided by legislation, and the subject is now under discussion. I am informed that the state of the Column has been recently examined by the Office of Works, and that there is no risk of accident.

POST OFFICE—ST. PANCRAS DISTRICT POST OFFICE—"EXTRA DUTY."

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he is aware that at the north west chief district post office in St. Pancras, there are a large number of postmen doing "extra duty" through insufficient staff; and, whether such "extra duty" is officially imposed, or willingly undertaken by the men themselves; and, if so, whether it is possible to make extra payment for such "extra duty?"

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): An increase of work, arising from extensive alterations of the Mail Service in the North Western Postal District of London, has necessitated a certain amount of extra duty. It is occasionally necessary to impose extra duty in all the London post offices during pressure of work, and it is remunerated by extra payment.

EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES)—ELEMENTARY EDUCATION—ADMISSION OF CHILDREN TO SCHOOLS.

Sir CHARLES FORSTER (Walsall) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether the managers and teachers of schools have the right of refusing any child of school age admission when that child has attended that school for years and complied with the usual conditions; and, whether his attention has been called to certain irregularities which have taken place recently at the Church School in Blakenall; and, if so, whether he can state what were the irregularities complained of?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): Managers and teachers of schools have no right of refusing any child of school age admission to a school, provided that there is room for the child in it. The only alleged irregularities of which I have official knowledge are as to children being kept in school beyond school hours, a practice which is discouraged by the Department. From the case shown to me by the hon. Baronet, there seems to have been an assault on the schoolmistress by a relative of children so kept in; but upon this there has been a judicial decision.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON DEPRESSION OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—THE EVIDENCE.

Mr. BROCKLEHURST (Cheshire, Macclesfield) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether, in compliance with the wishes of many of the Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom, and of the trading community generally, who are deeply concerned in the evidence at present being taken before the Royal Commissioners on Trade Depression, arrangements could be made to admit the representatives of the press, so that such evidence might be disseminated daily, in addition to being published in the bulky form of a Blue Book not conveniently accessible to private individuals?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): I have communicated with the Royal Commission on Trade Depression as to my hon. Friend's Question. I understand that another Report will be issued very shortly, and that they will continue to report as frequently and promptly as possible; but the admission of representatives of the Press would be contrary to precedent, would change the character of the proceedings, and would be quite impracticable, with the present accommodation afforded to the Commission.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—TUBBERCURRY UNION.

Captain M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been directed to certain proceedings in connection with the election of Poor Law guardians in the Tobercurry Union, county Sligo; whether he will recommend the Local Government Board to grant a sworn inquiry into the circumstances, with the view of having the election declared void, owing to the intimidation, both lay and clerical, that is alleged to have prevailed; and, whether it is in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Local Government Board for priests, closely identified with the National League, to attend in the Board Room on the occasion of the election of Chairman and Vice Chairman, and there openly direct the guardians how to vote?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Inquiries by the Local Government Board into the results of Poor Law elections are confined to the question whether the Guardian elected did or did not obtain a majority of valid votes. For the offences which are alleged to have been committed in this instance legal penalties are provided, and it rests with the parties aggrieved to put the law in force. The matter referred to in the last paragraph of the Question is one entirely for the consideration and decision of the Board of Guardians.

STATE OF IRELAND—POLICE PROTECTION—MR. ST. GEORGE, BALLINASLOE.

Captain M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the precautions necessary for the protection of Mr. St. George, at Ballinasloe, will be at all relaxed in consequence of the following letter, which has been addressed to and read at a meeting of the Ballinasloe Town Board on the 24th ultimo, from Mr. Mathew Harris, M.P.:—

> "With reference to asking a question about the hut for Mr. St. George, the Irish party decided it would be better not to refer to it. A debate would follow, and speeches would be made. It is better the English people at present should not be led to believe that there is crime or any appearance of crime. At some future time I shall bring this (Mr. St. George's) bad man's acts before the House of Commons."

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The precautions thought necessary for the protection of Mr. St. George will be in no way relaxed.

NAVAL PENSIONS—WILLIAM KEMPTON.

Mr. LEICESTER (West Ham, S.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether the agreement under which William Kempton, now of 12, Katherine Street, Silvertown, in 1854, joined the Naval Service, entitled him to a pension of sixpence per day after serving ten years; whether he is aware that William Kempton served twelve years, and was then informed that he could not receive his pension until fifty years of age; and that, having now reached that age, he is informed by the authorities at the Admiralty that he is not entitled to such a pension; and, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the agreement referred to?

The CIVIL LORD (Mr. R. W. Duff) (Banffshire) (who replied) said: No agreement was entered into with William Kempton in 1854 which entitled him to any pension after 10 years' service, nor was he informed he would receive a pension at 50 years of age. He was 11 years, seven months, in the Navy, and 20 years' service is necessary to give a man a claim to pension for service. Should his health fail, he will be considered in respect of assistance from Greenwich Hospital funds.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (IRELAND)—MR. QUINN, CARNACALLY, CO. DOWN.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the landlord of the townland of Carnacally, county Down, Mr. Quinn, and his agent, Mr. Manley, a solicitor, gave permission to John M'Carthy to sell seven acres of land to a widow Torley, both being tenants upon the estate; whether, when the price had been agreed to by these tenants, Manley refused to sanction the sale until a deed of conveyance was executed, draft of which was to be sent to him for approval; whether these tenants got the conveyance drawn at a cost of £2, their solicitor sending the document to Manley as requested; whether Manley approved of the draft, but demanded £2 2*s*. for approval fees; and, whether Manley had any right to insist upon a deed of conveyance, no such document having ever before been heard of upon the estate?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I think the hon. Member will see from the facts that this is not a matter in which the Government could interfere. It is from beginning to end purely a private transaction.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—GALLERIES OF THIS HOUSE—MEMBERS OF COLONIAL LEGISLATURES.

Dr. O'DOHERTY (Meath, N.) asked the honourable Member for North-West

Staffordshire, Whether any part of the galleries of this House is reserved for Members of Colonial Legislatures desiring to be present during a sitting?

THE LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. LEVESON GOWER) (Stafford, N.W.): In reply to the Question of the hon. Member, I have to say that this matter is not under the control of the Office of Works; but I am given to understand that, the space for the accommodation of strangers being very limited, no place is reserved for Members of Colonial Legislatures, though I have no doubt the proper authorities would endeavour, when practicable, to give a seat to Colonial Members who wished to attend a debate.

METROPOLIS—THE PARKS—ADORNMENT OF HYDE PARK.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether Her Majesty's Government would make use of the present opportunity of the present vacancy of the office, to throw open to the use and dedication to the public, for the improvement and adornment of Hyde Park, the grounds till recently in the occupation of the late Deputy Ranger of Hyde Park?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.), in reply, said, that having fully considered the circumstances of the case, it was not intended to ask the Ranger to make any change in the present arrangements.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—PENSIONS TO OFFICERS—CASE OF MR. JOHN BENSON, DUNFANAGHY.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. John Benson, late relieving officer of the Dunfanaghy Union, has recently been allowed a pension by the Local Government Board; whether, two years ago, the issue of a pension for this officer was refused, because he had, while serving as relieving officer, also acted as farmer and as poor rate collector, as well as bailiff to Mr. Nixon and to Lord Leitrim; and, what were the grounds for the recent decision?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that an inquiry was held into this case; and as it was shown that the officer devoted his entire time to the duties of his office the Local Government Board waived their objection to his being allowed a pension. He understood that the other offices previously held by Mr. Benson were discharged by his son.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR asked, would the right hon. Gentleman let the Board of Guardians know the facts of the case, as they were anxious to be informed upon them?

MR. JOHN MORLEY said, he presumed the Board of Guardians would address the Local Government Board on the subject.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—RIOTING AT CALEDON, CO. TYRONE.

MR. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it a fact that on the night of March 27th, an Orange drumming party, celebrating a victory over a Protestant Nationalist candidate at the Poor Law elections, paraded the streets of Caledon, county Tyrone, playing party tunes, firing revolver shots, and shouting "To —— with the Pope and Popery!" and "No Surrender!" with a Poor Law Guardian named Naye, carrying a sword, at their head, and attacked, among others, the house of John Hughes, in which his wife and daughter were lying ill, and smashed the windows with stones; did they also attack the house of a very old woman named Sally M'Cann, and was her little grandchild, who was sitting near the window, struck with a stone on the head; did the Nationalists give any provocation to these outrages; is it true that the proceedings were witnessed by a sergeant and five policemen; did they make any attempt to interfere with the rioters; how many of the latter have been made amenable; did Naye, after the attacks on the Nationalist houses, address the rioters from the steps of his own hotel, and will he be prosecuted for taking part in a riotous assembly; is the band that caused the disturbance the band known as "Lord Caledon's Band;" and, did Lord Caledon, two days after the declaration of the poll at the South Tyrone election, withdraw his custom for horse-shoeing and blacksmith's work from John Hughes, on the ground that he had voted for the Nationalist candidate, and did he start an Orange blacksmith in opposition to him; if so, will any notice be taken of his conduct as a Deputy Lieutenant, and will any steps be taken to stimulate the activity of the police?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It is a fact that on the night of the 27th ultimo Orange drumming parties, celebrating a victory gained at a Poor Law election, marched through Caledon. At one period Mr. Naye was at their head, but at that time their conduct was good. The police did not see a sword with Mr. Naye. Subsequently, having partaken of drink, the crowd commenced to behave pretty much as described in the Question; and for this conduct, so far as one can learn, there was neither excuse nor provocation. The proceedings were witnessed by a sergeant and four policemen, who appear to have acted as well as they could under difficult circumstances in the face of a very large crowd. Owing to the fact that very few stones were thrown, that the night was dark, and the crowd large, the police were unable to identify any of the stone-throwers; but five persons have been made amenable, and will be prosecuted for rioting. It was previous to the attack on the houses that Mr. Naye addressed the crowd, and there appears to be no grounds for prosecuting him. I understand that one of the bands—there were three—is largely, if not entirely, supported by Lord Caledon, who since the election is stated to have withdrawn his blacksmith's work from John Hughes, and given it to a man who happens to be an Orangeman. I do not at present see anything in the allegation against Lord Caledon to justify me in submitting the matter to the Lord Lieutenant.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) (for Mr. MACARTNEY) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Naye was, on the evening of the 26th March last, dragged from his own doorstep and beaten with sticks; and, whether, on a previous occasion, Lord Caledon's private band, on coming into the town, was fired at from a place called Cull's entry?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: The only foundation the police can find for the statement in the first paragraph is that on the night in question Mr. Naye was putting a man, who was disorderly, out of his licensed premises, and they assaulted each other when outside. A shot was fired on the 26th of February last from Cull's Entry after Lord Caledon's band; but it was not known by whom.

TRAMWAYS AND PUBLIC COMPANIES (IRELAND) ACT—THE WEST CLARE RAILWAY.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, with regard to the loan he is about to grant for the continuance of the works connected with the West Clare Railway, he has obtained any information from those competent to give an impartial opinion, as to the prospects of its ever paying even its working expenses; whether he is aware that the Chairman or Director, Mr. J. F. Lombard, is a near relative of the contractor, Mr. W. Murphy, M.P., and whether they fixed their own price for construction, no tender having been asked for or even permitted; whether these two gentlemen are the principal promoters, and, consequently, are the only persons likely to benefit by the making of the line; and, whether he will cause further inquiries to be made before finally granting this loan?

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): Before the Secretary to the Treasury answers the Question on the Paper, I beg to ask him if this line of railway is not being constructed under the provisions of the Tramways Act of two years ago; if the capital advanced is not guaranteed, together with interest at 4 per cent in perpetuity—firstly, by three baronies; and, secondly, by the county of Clare at large; if the presentment of these three baronies and the Grand Jury of the County Clare unanimously sanctioned all the arrangements made, and if they are not also represented specially on the Board of Directors; and if, under the circumstances, the Question of the hon. Member is not in intent a gratuitous libel?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The estimate for the construction of this line, which is to be constructed under the provisions of the Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1883, has, I am informed, been considered satisfactory by the Privy Council, before whom the proposal was sent. I am informed that the Chairman is the father-in-law of the contractor; but that is a matter with which the Treasury has nothing to do. The Treasury has agreed to make the loan on certain terms, which have not yet been accepted.

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE—GREECE AND TURKEY.

MR. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleshall) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Greek Government has now accepted the advice of the Great Powers, and will refrain from breaking the peace of Europe?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): The Greek Government have not intimated their acceptance of the advice of the Powers. Her Majesty's Government have no information which would enable me to give an adequate answer to the latter part of the hon. Member's Question.

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT—EXAMINING OFFICERS OF CUSTOMS.

MR. PULESTON (Devonport) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether a Memorial has been received from those Examining Officers of Customs, who were formerly Lower Division Clerks in the same Service, showing that the prospects which were held out to induce them to enter the Outdoor Department in June 1882 have been considerably reduced since that date in consequence of the abolition of superior posts, and praying that either compensation be granted for this loss of prospects, or that they be allowed to return to their former position; and, whether this Memorial has been considered?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Memorial in question has been received, and subject to certain conditions, which will be communicated in due course to the Commissioners of Customs, the Treasury has no objection to the Memorialists returning to their former position.

DWELLINGS FOR THE WORKING CLASSES—REMISSION OF PROPERTY TAX.

MR. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If it is a fact that Property Tax paid by the Peabody Trustees for the dwellings let by them at profit rentals is remitted by the Treasury, on the ground that the Peabody Trust is a charity; and, if so, whether the Treasury will make a like remission to those Companies and Societies which have been established with the same objects as the Peabody Trust, namely, to provide improved dwellings for the working classes, and so avoid the injustice of unequal taxation of the tenants of the buildings belonging to the respective parties?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) (who replied) said, that the Peabody Trustees did not pay a property tax for the dwellings let by them; and if any Company or Society could show that they were exactly on the same footing, no objection to giving them the same relief would be raised.

ACCIDENTS IN MINES COMMISSION—THE REPORT.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Inasmuch as the Final Report which has just been presented by the Accidents in Mines Commission, with its Appendices, contains a large body of information which will be of great interest, particularly with reference to intended legislation, to colliery owners, managers, overmen, and workmen engaged in coal and other mines, on the following among other subjects; the different varieties of safety lamps, the details of their construction, as explained by drawings, and the manner in which they have stood the tests to which they have been submitted by the Commissioners; the use of the electric light in mines; the part played by the coal dust in explosions; the use of powder and other explosives in coal mining; the safe employment of explosives, other than powder, in fiery and dusty mines; the use of substitutes for explosives in coal mining; whether steps will be taken for issuing a larger edition of the complete Report than it is customary to issue of Reports of Commissions, say an issue of not less than 5,000 copies, at as low a price as possible?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): In reply to my hon. Friend, I have to say that the sale of Parliamentary Papers has lately been placed, by Resolution of both Houses, under the management of the Stationery Office. The size of the edition of any Report would be a matter of arrangement between Mr. Speaker and that Office. With regard to the price, I am not aware of any precedent for making an exception in the case of a Paper of special interest. The price of Papers is fixed in accordance with Rules carefully laid down by the two Houses; and it would be extremely difficult to depart from those Rules without re-opening the whole question as to price, which is not, I think, desirable.

CITY OF LONDON—SALARY OF THE COMMON SERJEANT.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the statement in Friday's *Standard*, that the Common Council, in secret conclave, have agreed to raise the salary of the Common Serjeant to £2,250; whether he approves of the practice of raising the salaries of judges during their term of office; whether he can take any steps to prevent such a Resolution, passed in this clandestine manner, from taking effect; whether he considers the members of the Court of Aldermen and Court of Common Council qualified to appoint to and exercise financial control over the various high judicial offices in their gift; and, whether he can promise to initiate or facilitate legislation with a view to placing the judgeships of the City Courts on a more satisfactory basis?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): I have to inform my hon. Friend that I have no authority to interfere with any financial arrangement which the Common Council may think fit to make with respect to the salary of their judicial officers. The Lord Mayor has been good enough to send me a statement which shows that there was nothing secret or clandestine in the way in which this increase of salary was either recommended or approved of. On the contrary, the recommendation was printed in the summons for the Court sent out to members. The discussion, in so far as it affected the position of a Judge, being of a confidential nature, was carried on with closed doors. Although, as a general rule, additions to the salaries of the Judges during their term of office appear to me open to grave objections, I am aware of several exceptions to this principle, as in the case of County Court Judges and certain Recorders and stipendiary magistrates, whose increases are justified by, for instance, heavy increase of work. It is not for me to express any opinion as to the propriety of the existing law; but when the whole question of Metropolitan Government comes up this particular question of the appointment of judicial officers by elective bodies cannot fail to demand consideration.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that very recently the salary of the Recorder had been raised by the Court of Common Council?

Mr. CHILDERS said, he had no information on the point; but he had expressly used the word Recorder as one of the officers whose salaries had been increased.

PARLIAMENT—SESSIONAL ORDERS—NOTICE OF MOTION FOR THE ISSUE OF A WRIT.

Mr. LEWIS (Londonderry) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether the Government intend to move, on an early day, the usual Sessional Order requiring three days' Notice of Motion for the issue of a Writ to fill up a vacancy occasioned by a Member being unseated for corrupt practices?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Charles Russell) (Hackney, S.) said, yes; he had given Notice of the Motion.

INDIA—THE BURMAH CROWN JEWELS.

Mr. RICHARD (Merthyr Tydvil) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to the following statement of *The Times* correspondent at Mandalay, which appeared in that paper on 17th March:—

> "The crown jewels and the valuable rubies found in the Palace are to be sent to London to be sold there. The best furniture of the Palace will go to the Government House at Simla;"

whether this statement is correct; and, if so, by whose authority this was done;

and, whether it meets the approval of the Government at Home?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH) (Lancashire, Clitheroe): The Viceroy reported that a small amount of jewellery and a considerable number of precious stones sewn on umbrellas and dresses were found in the Mandalay Palace, and that it was his intention to sell them, under direction of the Prize Committee, for the benefit of the Government, except a few which would be reserved for the Queen. It has since been determined to send them all for examination before they are sold. With regard to the furniture, the Viceroy first proposed, as a matter of economy, to transfer some of it to Simla; but I believe that it has lately been determined to sell it on the spot. This will meet with the Secretary of State's approval.

REMOVAL TERMS (BURGHS) (SCOTLAND) ACT (1881) AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether he will introduce the Bill respecting the Terms of Removal before Easter, in order that time may be given to fully consider the dates which may be fixed for the terms of Whitsunday and Martinmas?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.), in reply, said, that it was his intention to introduce a Bill upon this subject.

THE MERCHANT SERVICE—ENGLISH SEAMEN.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If his attention has been called to the danger to the commercial interests of this Country from the growing exclusion of English seamen from the Merchant Service; and, whether it is in contemplation of the Government to take any action in the matter?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): My attention has been called to the increasing number of foreign seamen employed in British merchant shipping. Inquiry is now going on as to the cause and extent of this employment, and a Report on the subject will shortly be submitted to this House and to the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea. I have no power to interfere with such employment, however much I may regret it. The foreign seamen are mainly from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway; and I understand that the Mercantile Marine of those countries is at present greatly depressed.

COMMONS AND OPEN SPACES—HAYLING COMMON.

MR. BUXTON (Essex, Walthamstow) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he will undertake not to proceed with the Bill confirming the Provisional Order of the Land Commissioners relating to Hayling Common, until such time as the evidence before the Commons Committee relating to the subject has been printed and circulated?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BROADHURST) (Birmingham, Bordesley), in reply, said, he would do his best to meet the wishes of the hon. Member.

SOUTH AFRICA—BASUTOLAND—SALE OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

MR. M'ARTHUR (Leicester) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he is able to confirm the satisfactory report lately received from Basutoland to the effect that the natives have now combined with their chiefs to exclude spirituous liquors from that country; and, whether Colonel Clarke, British Resident in Basutoland, is being supported by the authorities of the Cape Colony and of the Free State in a temperance policy?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): I think I can best answer the Question of my hon. Friend by quoting from a despatch from Colonel Clarke, dated January 13 last, in which, after stating that the whole of the Chiefs in Basutoland now profess loyalty, and with rare exceptions offer every facility to officers and police, who can travel safely throughout the country in the execution of their duties, he says—

> "Further, I am thankful to say we have succeeded now in putting a stop to the internal traffic in brandy, and are endeavouring, by a system of border patrols, to entirely check the introduction of drink, the evil which, for the last five years, has been instrumental in paralyzing the action of civilized government."

In answer to the second Question, although in receipt of no detailed information on the subject, we have every reason to believe that the authorities both of the Cape Colony and the Free State have given their support to Colonel Clarke in his policy. Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner for South Africa, will be in this country in a few weeks, when, no doubt, more precise information on the subject will be obtained from him.

ARMY (IRELAND)—DEATH OF A SOLDIER IN THE BELFAST MILITARY HOSPITAL.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) (for Mr. SEXTON) asked the Secretary of State for War, with regard to the death of Private Aherne, in the Military Hospital, Belfast, from the effects of injuries inflicted by violence in the square of the Military Barrack at Belfast, What course he intends to take upon the statement of the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, that Aherne lay for seven hours in the Military Hospital without any medical attendance; that the police officers who called at the barrack to make inquiry were informed that "nothing unusual had occurred;" that the dying man's deposition was not taken; and that the fact of his death was concealed from the civil authorities, and only came to their knowledge through a statement volunteered by a servant of the undertaker who provided the requisites for the funeral; whether the Military officials at Belfast made no intimation to Private Aherne's mother or brother of the injuries he had suffered, or of his death; whether Private Aherne's brother, acting on behalf of his mother, has written to the Military authorities at Belfast, and to the War Office, five times, with respect to the effects of the deceased soldier, and whether the matter has yet been settled; whether Private Aherne had served fourteen years; and, in view of the fact that his mother has now no means of subsistence, whether any allowance will be made to her?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): Before Notice had been given of the hon. Member's previous Question addressed to the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, the hospital sergeant who was on duty was tried by court martial for his action in reference to the death of the deceased, and was reduced to the rank of corporal. It appears that the reply that "nothing unusual had occurred," as reported to the police, might have been on account of the police having inquired at the barracks of the Highland Light Infantry; whereas Aherne belonged to the Royal Irish, and was in their barracks. The depositions of the dying man could not be taken, as from the 6th of January up to his death he was delirious. Previous to that no fatal result had been anticipated. Notice was served on the Civil authorities, and the inquest was held on the following day. Aherne's relations were written to on the 6th of January to the address which he had given; but the letter came back from the Post Office. The mother was then communicated with by the priest of the parish after his death. Two communications as to his effects were received at the War Office; but some necessary information was awaited. That information having since arrived the distribution of the effects to the legal relatives has been authorized. Private Aherne had nearly 13½ years' service; but there is no Regulation under which the Secretary of State could make any allowance to the deceased soldier's mother.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE—"THE SPENDING DEPARTMENTS."

MR. RYLANDS (Burnley) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is the intention of the Government, at an early period this Session, to take steps for the appointment of Select Committees to inquire into the Administration and Expenditure of the great Spending Departments of the State?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): In answer to my hon. Friend, I am afraid there is no likelihood that we can see our way to appoint such Committees during the present Session. Viewing together the number of Committees the House of Commons has at present appointed, and the grave character of the subjects to be dealt with by the Committee on Procedure and that on East Indian affairs, we must abandon the hope of really seeing those Committees during the present Session.

PARLIAMENTARY AND MUNICIPAL REGISTRATION.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) asked the First Lord of the

Treasury, Whether he will give facilities for the consideration of the Parliamentary Voters (Registration) Bill, in which a large number of honourable Members are interested; and, what course he intends to pursue on the whole question of registration?

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, whether the Government have in contemplation a Bill for the improvement of Parliamentary and Municipal Registration; and whether this Bill will contain provisions for shortening the period within which the qualification of the voter shall become effectual?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.) (who replied) said: It is our intention to introduce a Bill dealing with the question of the registration of Parliamentary and probably of municipal voters; but I cannot say how soon it will be found practicable to ask leave to introduce this Bill. I am not at present in a position to say whether we can deal with any question of franchise or qualification in this Bill. In reply to the first Question of my hon. Friend the Member for St. Pancras (Sir Julian Goldsmid), I regret that it is quite out of our power to give any facilities, by which I understand that he means to devote any Government time to the discussion of his Bill.

PARLIAMENT—PUBLIC BUSINESS—QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE CIVIL SERVICE, 1880-86.

Mr. LEAKE (Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will consider the expediency of presenting a Return to the House of the number of Questions put to Ministers of the Crown during the years 1880-85, and to the month of April 1886, having reference to increase of pay, reduction of hours of attendance, holidays, and other matters affecting the position of the Civil and other Servants of the State; whether, in such a Return, the names of honourable Members putting such Questions, of the constituencies they represent, and the particular services in whose interest the Questions were asked could be included; and, whether, in view of the Constitutional incapacity of any private Member of the House to propose any increase in Estimates submitted by the Government of the day, the First Lord of the Treasury can suggest any means by which the increasing interposition of Members between the administrative heads of departments and their staffs could be judiciously mitigated, in the interests of public economy and of administrative discipline?

Mr. PULESTON (Devonport) asked the Prime Minister, whether he was aware that a large proportion of the Questions aimed at by the hon. Member were put in the interests of public economy, as well as to effect a just and equitable organization of the Civil Service; and whether such a Return as that asked for would not be inconsistent with the freedom of the House and of the Constitutional right and duty of the Representatives of the people?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): In reference to the Question just put, it may be a great piece of ignorance on my part, but I am not aware of the fact implied in the Question, that most of the inquiries put to Ministers on the subject of the Civil Service, its emoluments and conditions, are with a view to public economy. With regard to the latter part of the Question, I cannot say that information respecting the classification of Questions would be inconsistent with the freedom of the House; and I so far agree with the hon. Member that I think we should carefully avoid, in procuring that information, anything invidious as regards any particular class or portion of the Members of the House. With respect to the Question of my hon. Friend (Mr. Leake), I certainly enter very much into the spirit of the inquiry, and I believe that the Return might be had with considerable labour. Upon the whole, I think it would be less open to any exception, such as has been taken to it, if a more comprehensive Return of the character, classification, and number of Questions were to be asked for; but, before determining upon a method to obtain that kind of information, however, I should be glad to wait a little to see what the Committee on Procedure—from which we all hope much good—can do for us, if it can do anything, with regard to Questions. If the Committee on Procedure is unable to grapple with the subject, then it will be time to consider whether the Question of my hon. Friend, or some extension of it, might not be thought of.

THE MERCHANT SERVICE — CHAIN CABLES AND ANCHORS—TESTING.

MR. HICKMAN (Wolverhampton, W.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to a discussion which has been going on for some time in *The Engineer* upon cables and anchors, and particularly to a letter published 19th February, signed "Valentine," which says—

> "There are thousands of test certificates sent out with chains and anchors that have never been near a testing machine, in fact I myself have signed thousands;"

whether he is aware that it is the practice of Lloyd's, in re-classing ships, not to have the cables and anchors re-tested; in fact, that, having once passed the statutory test, it is taken for granted that cables are good for all time; whether he is aware that the Mersey Dock and Harbour Board find it necessary to change the bow length of their Light Ship cables once a year at least, and the whole cables every three years; and, whether he will take steps to remedy the evils referred to?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Chain Cables and Anchors Acts prohibit sale or purchase of chain cables which are not tested, stamped, and certified; but this provision only applies to chain cables for British ships. There is a large business done in chains for other purposes as well as for export; and I understand that great irregularity does exist in issuing private test certificates for these chains and cables; but it is outside the Act. I am informed that it is the practice of the surveyors of Lloyd's Register Committee to make a very careful examination of all chain cables on re-classing ships, and to require any parts to be renewed or re-tested where necessary. I am also informed that the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board require a very careful examination of the mooring chains of their vessels to be made once a year, and that the parts of the chain cables in contact with the ground are renewed once a year. The chain cables of passenger steamers and passenger ships are examined by surveyors of the Board of Trade annually, and those of ships classed in *Lloyd's Register* are examined by that Society, and chain cables of all ships detained by the Board of Trade officers as unsafe can be condemned if they are inefficient. I do not see what further steps I can take beyond instructing the Department to be very careful to attend to the provisions of the Acts. I have no power to interfere with the manufacture in this country of chains or chain cables for home or foreign buyers, to whom the Acts do not apply, and who do not desire to have the security of our public tests.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—"BRYCE *v.* RUSDEN."

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether his attention has been called to the report of the proceedings upon the application for a new trial in the case of Bryce *v.* Rusden, showing that it was granted merely upon the question of reduction of damages, and not in any way leaving the conduct of Sir Arthur Gordon sub judice; whether it was proved at the trial that Sir Arthur Gordon wrote more than one letter to Mr. Rusden, conveying serious imputations upon Mr. Bryce's character, and with the express object of enabling Mr. Rusden to publish damaging statements with regard to Mr. Bryce; whether it was further proved that such imputations and statements had no foundation in fact; whether, at the time when Sir Arthur Gordon forwarded such statements, he was Governor of New Zealand, and Mr. Bryce was a member of his Cabinet as Native Minister; and, whether any and what steps will be taken in consequence of Sir Arthur Gordon's conduct?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): I find from the shorthand writer's notes of the application for a new trial in the case of "Bryce *v.* Rusden," which my hon. Friend was good enough to send me this morning, that he is quite right in stating that a new trial was granted merely on the question of the reduction of damages; but my hon. Friend, as a lawyer, must be aware that, even on such a question, the whole merits of the case may be reopened, and new evidence which may give a different complexion to the entire case may be adduced. Under these circumstances, I could not admit that the facts of the case, including the conduct of Sir Arthur Gordon, are not still *sub judicé.* With regard to the second and third Questions, I have already stated that the Colonial Office has no information as to the evidence given at the trial beyond what is derived from the newspaper reports, which are, of course, open to the whole public. The fourth Question I have already answered in the affirmative. With regard to the last Question, I would point out that Sir Arthur Gordon has long ceased to be Governor of New Zealand, and that he was not a party to, or represented at, the trial. Under these circumstances, and seeing that judicial proceedings in the case are still pending, I must adhere to the answer which I gave to my hon. Friend 10 days ago. But I have to add that Earl Granville has reason to know that the attention of Sir Arthur Gordon has been called to the reports of the trial; and my noble Friend, therefore, expects to receive a statement from Sir Arthur on the subject.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (IRELAND)—EJECTMENTS ON LORD MORLEY'S ESTATE.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it true that Robert H. Johnston, of Bawnboy House, who is agent to Lord Morley, issued eighty ejectment processes against tenants on Lord Morley's estate, near Dawra, for the last Ballyconnell Quarter Sessions, and that he charged the tenants who settled with him £1 12*s.* costs in each case, although the legal costs of a civil bill ejectment is only 16*s.* before entry; and, whether the Government will proceed against Johnston?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle - on - Tyne): The noble Lord who is mentioned in this Question informs me that he is not the owner of the property referred to, though he has a good deal to do with its management. It appears that there are on the estate 270 tenants owing from two to four years' rent, and only 54 of these were proceeded against, being considered able to pay. Of these 54, all but five or six were settled with, either on the basis of paying down one year's rent and costs, or by being given time to enable them to do so. In no case was a tenant charged £1 12*s.* for costs. The cost of a process of this kind before entry (when the process has to be posted) is £1 5*s.* 8*d.*, with 2*s.* 6*d.* extra for each additional defendant. I believe the Judge is responsible for the correctness of the charge.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he expected to get the second reading of the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill taken before Thursday?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside), in reply, said, it was impossible for him to answer that Question. It entirely depended on the progress of Business. If the Crofters Bill had been got through last week he might have moved the second reading this evening.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

The Marquess of STAFFORD (Sutherland) asked the Prime Minister, Whether, considering the importance of the Crofters Bill, the right hon. Gentleman could see his way to recommend a Morning Sitting on Tuesday, if it were necessary for facilitating the progress of the Bill?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I sympathize very much with my noble Friend; but, at the same time, we could not have a Morning Sitting to-morrow without the general assent of the House. I believe the subjects standing for to-morrow evening are favourable to it. I venture to hope the Crofters Bill may go through Committee to-night; but if it should not get through, but should, at the same time, come so near its completion in Committee that there would be a probability of finishing it to-morrow, then I think my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate might very properly consult the general feeling of the House, and, if Members were agreeable, put down the Bill for a Morning Sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 118.] COMMITTEE.

[*Progress* 1*st April.*]

[THIRD NIGHT.]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 6 (Fixed rent).

The Marquess of STAFFORD (Sutherland): I beg to move at the end of the first section of the clause, in line 41, to insert—

> (2.) This section shall extend to any holding situate in a crofting parish, and held by a tenant under lease at a rent not exceeding thirty pounds in money; and where the rent of any such holding has been fixed by the Commission under this section, the valued rent shall, as from the first term of Whitsunday or Martinmas next succeeding the decision of the Court, come in place of the rent reserved by the lease, and, save by mutual agreement, shall not be altered during the continuance of the lease."

The object of this Amendment is to bring before the Commission the case of the small leaseholders in the crofting parishes in the Highlands. They are persons in a very similar position to that which is occupied by the crofters who come under the provisions of the Bill. Now, I think that, in dealing with the Highland townships, it is most undesirable that a large class—and that, too, the best class—of crofters—namely, the small leaseholders, should not derive any benefit from the provisions of the Bill. I therefore propose that this section should be extended to any holding in a crofting parish held by a tenant under lease which does not exceed £30 in rent, that being the sum fixed in the case of a crofter.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 41, insert—

> "(2.) This section shall extend to any holding situate in a crofting parish, and held by a tenant under lease at a rent not exceeding *thirty* pounds in money; and where the rent of any such holding has been fixed by the Commission under this section, the valued rent shall, as from the first term of Whitsunday or Martinmas next succeeding the decision of the Court, come in place of the rent reserved by the lease, and, save by mutual agreement, shall not be altered during the continuance of the lease."—(*The Marquess of Stafford.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I quite appreciate the reasons which have actuated my noble Friend in making his proposal, and also the spirit in which he has moved it; but I am afraid that I cannot accept it, because it is obvious that if leases are once brought within the range and scope of the Bill, a great step will be taken beyond the historical reasons upon which the Bill has been justified. Those reasons have already been explained, and it is not necessary that I should repeat the explanation. An attempt has been made to provide for the case of those persons who have succeeded to a continuous occupation from generation to generation by a sort of customary tenure; but if the Bill once permits persons who do not enjoy that tenure to be equally entitled—persons who have made bargains in the shape of leases—bargains presumably involving commercial considerations — we should get into a region altogether outside the purpose of the Bill. I would also point out this consideration—that if you are to include the small leaseholders, there are in the Highlands leases of many kinds. There is one kind of lease in particular which is very familiar with those who are acquainted with the Highlands—namely, a lease where a piece of ground is let at a low rent, for probably 21 or 30 years, on condition that the tenant who occupies under it shall reclaim so much additional land every year. It is only in consideration of that obligation that the land has been let; and it is quite plain that it would be extremely difficult to deal with cases of that kind under the Bill. I may also point out that there might be a question raised under the Amendment of my noble Friend as to what are commonly called building leases. They form another class of leases altogether, and embody commercial contracts which it would be extremely difficult to deal with.

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I believe that one cause of the failure of the Irish Land Act was its being altogether too restricted in its operation, and that it gave the benefits of the Act only to tenants from year to year, instead of dealing with leaseholders generally; and I think that the Government are ill-advised in framing the present Bill upon similar lines. I cannot for the life of me see why the length of the term during which the tenant is occupier of the holding should in any way affect the legislation upon this question. It is quite patent to anyone who knows anything about the condition of agriculture at the present moment that the leaseholder is in a much worse quandary than the tenant from year to year. I shall, therefore, support the Amendment of the noble Marquess with great confidence if it is carried to a division. I shall vote for it because I feel that, where leases have been forced upon the tenants, they are just as much entitled to the benefit which this Bill confers as the crofter who has not a lease.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanarkshire, N.E.): I have placed an Amendment on the Paper dealing with the same question upon Clause 7, and that must be my excuse for intervening just now, because I share in the desire which all of us have to expedite the proceedings in Committee to-night as much as possible, in order that we may get through the Bill. I appreciate very strongly the objections which the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has stated to introducing leaseholders into the Bill. I certainly would not be a party to any Amendment which would extend the scope of the Bill beyond the limits which have been laid down, and which I think may be justified on very substantial grounds; and I quite admit that, at first sight, the admission of leaseholders to the provisions of the Bill would be likely to furnish a lever to those who wish to extend the principle of fixity of tenure and fair rent to other parts of the country—objects in which I, for my part, do not concur. But I would ask my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate to reconsider this point. We are, after all, desirous of doing justice, on certain principles, to the crofters who reside within certain geographical limits. Now, it is quite true that, speaking roughly and generally, a tenure under a lease is a sign that the man is not a crofter. As a rule, a crofter is a tenant from year to year, but that rule is subject to exceptions; and when we know that exceptions do exist I do not think it ought to prevent the Committee from doing justice to the crofters, whose rights are the subject of the Bill. I have put the case in a somewhat different manner from that in which it has been put by the Amendment of the noble Marquess. The noble Marquess's Amendment would apply only to Clause 6, which relates to fixed rents, and it only gives to the leaseholder, as well as the crofter, the benefit of a fixed rent. It does not, however, give to him the right of compensation for improvement under the Bill. I propose, by my Amendment to Clause 7, to provide that—

> "Where a tenant falls within the definition of a crofter in this Act, except when his tenancy is under a lease instead of from year to year, and such tenant within thirty years prior to the passing of the Act or his predecessors in the same family, have been crofters occupying the same holding, which such tenant occupies at the passing of this Act, or part thereof, such tenant shall be entitled, upon one year's notice in writing to the landlord, to renounce his tenancy as at any term of Whitsunday or Martinmas, and shall thereafter be deemed to be a crofter within the meaning of this Act."

I propose to make a general application of the Bill to a limited class of leaseholding crofters; and those whom I include in my Amendment are those who have themselves, or whose families have been, crofters on the same holding within the last 30 years. I think it is impossible to dispute that a leaseholder in that position is just as much a crofter as others who come within the scope of the Bill. I can point to instances in which that is the case, and in which I think it would be an act of extreme injustice if we were to exclude the individual crofters to whom I refer from the benefits of the Bill—for instance, in the Black Isle a large number of crofters have got leases for 19 years—there are several hundreds, I believe, and only about 5 per cent of the crofters have not got leases. The only reason why those who have not got leases are in that position is that they have been less deserving and less provident than their neighbours. Ninety-five per cent of the crofters are deserving and well-doing men; but if this Bill passes without amendment those deserving persons will be excluded from the benefit of the Bill, although they are crofters in every sense of the word; whereas the 5 per cent of the less deserving and less provident will be included, and will participate in the benefits of the Bill. There are other instances in the county of Sutherland, as the noble Marquess well knows. I would, therefore, ask my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate to accept the Amendment in the limited form in which I suggest it should be framed. I do not think it would in that form be open to any possible abuse, and it would undoubtedly confer a considerable benefit upon a large and deserving class of the community.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I would ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, if he is not prepared to accept an Amendment in favour of existing leases, whether he will make a compromise by accepting the modification of this principle as contained in the provisions of the Irish Land Act? That Act does not interfere with current leases; but it provides that at the termination of a lease the tenant who then comes in under the Bill is to be a present tenant. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that modification? The only effect would be that at the termination of an existing lease the tenant would come in as a present tenant under the Act, with all the protection which the law would give.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): The provisions of the Irish Land Act are very complicated in this respect, and very different from those contained in the present measure. We hope to give an element of permanency, and some other things which the Irish tenant did not get. The man who has made his bargain is out of the historical scope of the Bill; and therefore I am afraid I cannot accept either the Amendment of my noble Friend, or that of my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Lanarkshire (Mr. D. Crawford).

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): There is another argument against this Amendment, in addition to that which has just been stated by the right hon. and learned Gentleman. If the Amendment of the noble Marquess or the Amendment of the hon. Member for North-East Lanarkshire (Mr. D. Crawford) were carried, it would undoubtedly have the effect of destroying leases altogether, and of substituting in their place the system of common ownership of land. Whatever we may think about that, everybody must admit that the system of common ownership is an old-world system which has been entirely exploded by modern ideas, because it has been found altogether antagonistic to all true progress among the people. I am not going to argue the point whether the Government would be right in stereotyping that system where it exists in the Highlands. I will only say that if they re-introduce it where it has ceased to be operative, everyone must admit that it would be the most retrograde step the Committee could take. I therefore hail with great satisfaction the announcement of the Government that they do not propose in any part of the Bill to interfere with leases.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I confess that I cannot see how the adoption of these Amendments would have the effect which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour) has attributed to them of introducing any question as to the common ownership of land. The only effect would be that individual crofters who now hold under a lease would, if these Amendments were passed, be entitled to have a fair rent fixed, the same as any other crofters, from year to year. I understand that that is the only object which the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherlandshire (the Marquess of Stafford) had in introducing the Amendment. I sympathize with the noble Marquess, and I am very sorry that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate is not prepared to accept any Amendment on the point. I will not say that the Amendment of the noble Marquess is put in the best possible form; I understand that the effect of it would be the exact converse of the Irish Act. While the Amendment of the noble Marquess provides that the Land Commission should give to these leaseholders a fair rent, but not fixity of tenure, the Irish Act gives fixity of tenure, but makes no provision for a fair rent. No one can doubt that the one point of all others in respect of which the Irish Land Act of 1881 has worked successfully is in giving the leaseholders the benefit of fixity of tenure. It is undoubtedly the case that side by side on one estate there is a class of tenants of a particular character, and a class of exactly the same character on another estate. But in the one case the tenants hold from year to year, and in the other for a certain period of years. Why should the last class be prejudicially affected by that circumstance?

Although I admit that in this matter the precedent of the Irish Land Act is against us, still all the experience we have gained by the operations of the Irish Land Act is all in favour of the suggestion now urged. I therefore regret very much that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has refused to accept this Amendment, and I regret still more that he has refused to accept the suggestion of the hon. Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane) to modify the principle of the Bill, so as to bring it into accord with the Irish Act. This Bill only applies to small tenants; and I think that it is unfortunate that the right hon. and learned Gentleman should refuse to give to the small tenants of Scotland the particular advantage which has been given to the Irish tenants, be they small or large. He has stated that it is impossible to make this concession to a man who holds under an improving lease; but my impression is that that is the very class of tenants you should favour. The tenant who holds under an improving lease has done much to make 100 blades of grass grow where only one grew before; and surely the person who by his industry and skill has improved his tenure is the very person who has a strong moral right to the fixing of a fair rent. Although the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has declined to accept the Amendment in its present form, there are several others aiming at a somewhat similar object which will be brought forward later on in the Bill. I have one down myself; and I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will reconsider the decision he has announced before that Amendment is reached, because I am sure that the determination which he has announced will create very great dissatisfaction in Scotland. It will certainly create an impression that there is an indisposition on the part of the Government to accept any reasonable Amendment of the Bill.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I trust the noble Marquess will carry this Amendment to a division, and I am sure he will receive a considerable amount of support from below the Gangway on this side of the House. Many of us have a notion—and I am afraid it is only too correct a notion—that a large number of these persons have had leases forced upon them. ["Oh, oh!"] What I mean is, that they have had to accept leases or go. I call that having leases forced upon them; and whatever the "Oh!" with which that statement was received may mean, I shall express my conviction in the truth of it by voting for the Amendment.

Mr. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I strongly sympathize with the object of the Amendment, and I must express my regret that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has not been more conciliatory in this matter. I am quite aware that the adoption of the Amendment would somewhat extend the operation of the Bill; but as the measure is at present drafted it extends to a very small class of holdings, and it places the leaseholder, who pays very slightly above the rent of the crofter, in an invidious position as compared with his neighbour the crofter. The crofter gets benefit from the Bill, whereas the leaseholder gets no benefit from it whatever. What encouragement is there held out to the crofters to transfer their system of holdings in favour of a leasehold system? One large section of the constituency I have the honour to represent hold their land almost entirely under the primitive system of land tenure, by which they will get the benefit of the Bill, while in another part the tenants hold the land almost entirely as small leaseholders. These peasants who individually pay so small an amount of rent are not free to make terms for themselves when dealing with rich landlords owning the whole land. I am anxious to get for those poor tenants the benefit of the protection now offered to the crofters by this Bill; and, that being so, I entirely concur in the remarks which were made by the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherland (the Marquess of Stafford) and the hon. Member for North-East Lanarkshire (Mr. D. Crawford). I hope that, in some form or other, one of the Amendments which have been placed on the Paper will be adopted by the Government.

Mr. BARRY (Wexford, S.): I am sorry to find that the Government feel themselves called upon to resist this Amendment, because I think that unless this or some similar Amendment is made in the Bill the value of the measure itself will be very much impaired. A very strong feeling exists in Ireland as to the exclusion of leaseholders; and I am positively certain that in any new scheme some step must be taken by this House to deal with the question of the Irish leaseholders. I am not aware what number of crofters hold leases in Scotland, but I believe they are a very large number. It is further stated by those who know the crofters best that the leaseholders are the very best class of tenants, and a class much more entitled to protection under the Bill than any other. Therefore, if they are allowed to remain in the condition which they occupy at present, the benefits conferred by the Bill will be very seriously impaired. I take it that the object of the Bill is to improve the condition of the crofters, and that object will certainly not be accomplished unless the leaseholders are included in the measure. I would therefore urge upon the Government the desirability of accepting the Amendment which has been submitted to the Committee by the noble Marquess, and I sincerely hope that he will press it to a division.

Viscount LYMINGTON (Devon, South Molton): I am very glad that the Government have opposed this Amendment, because I regard it as one which, if carried, would introduce an entirely new principle into the Bill. This is a measure which has been brought in under exceptional circumstances, in order to deal with a very exceptional state of things; and I am bound to say that it seems to me we ought to be extremely jealous in insisting that principles should not be introduced into the measure which, I am perfectly certain, would hereafter be made use of for further legislation and for different objects. The Amendment of my noble Friend—and I presume that he will take a division upon it—provides that leaseholders holding at a rent not exceeding £30 shall be able to break their leases. Now, that seems to me to be a proceeding to which there is a very considerable amount of objection on the ground of common sense. A leaseholder paying a rent of £30 a-year is really a small farmer, and he has entered into a bargain with his landlord with full knowledge of the conditions under which he took the lease. In the next place, I hope the Committee will bear in mind that if they accept the Amendment of my noble Friend, they will be adopting a principle which cannot be confined to this particular class of tenants in crofting parishes. On the other hand, there is undoubtedly a good deal of feeling on this side of the House in favour of some concession to leaseholders, under certain conditions. There appears to be a desire that they should obtain some advantages under the Bill—for instance, I cannot see that the same objection would apply to the granting of leases, and that when a new lease is arranged the leaseholder might be allowed to share some of the advantages of common pasturage conferred by the Bill in regard to their holdings. I hope that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will abide by the decision which he has announced, and that he will persist in refusing to accept the Amendment. But, on the other hand, I think that the Government might consider the subject and see whether they cannot on Report bring up some Amendment carrying out the suggestion of the hon. Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane), which would have the effect of placing the leaseholder, at the conclusion of his lease, in the condition of a crofter, or a present tenant. That appears to me to be a proposition in behalf of which a great deal may be said; but I cannot support, and I hope the Committee also will not support, the Amendment of my noble Friend, which has been to a certain extent sprung upon the House and has not undergone that fair consideration which its importance demands. If it were carried, it would, in all probability, introduce principles entirely new and novel into the Bill, and into all the relations between landlord and tenant with regard to the occupation of the land.

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): The objection taken to the Amendment by the noble Viscount who has just sat down has reference to the consequences which will follow from its adoption, and not whether it is best in itself or not. It is stated that it is getting in the thin end of the wedge in order to prepare the way for something else. That is the great objection of the noble Viscount to the Amendment; but it is not a matter for the consideration of this Committee at all. The question for the Committee to consider is, what it is best to do, altogether regardless of what the consequences may be. We are told that the Amendment will introduce a novel principle into the Bill; but the Bill itself is a novelty altogether, and is based upon a new principle, and therefore I see nothing very outrageous in the Amendment of the noble Marquess. The only point upon which I differ from the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherland (the Marquess of Stafford) is, that he has limited the qualification. I should very much have preferred if, instead of £30, a limit of £50 had been proposed by the noble Marquess. I think it would have been very much to the advantage of the crofters if an increase of that kind had been made. I certainly hope that the noble Marquess will go to a division; but I do not think there is very much use in talking about these matters at all. It would save a great deal of time if the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate would stand up and say whether he is prepared to alter a line or a word of the Bill. It seems to me that he is not, and that it is a waste of time to discuss the provisions of the measure in Committee, if no Amendment, however reasonable, is to be made in it.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I quite agree with the object which the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty (Dr. McDonald) has in view; but I cannot say that I agree with the conclusion at which he has arrived. I certainly do not agree with the remarks he has made in reference to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate. Everyone who has been present during the consideration of the clauses of the Bill must be aware that every Amendment submitted to the Committee has been fairly considered upon its merits, and has received the serious attention of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. At the same time, while making that acknowledgment, I must express my regret that he has not found himself able, on this occasion, to accept the Amendment of the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherland (the Marquess of Stafford). What was stated a moment or two ago by the noble Viscount the Member for South Molton (Viscount Lymington) was that the Amendment was founded upon an entirely new principle. But if the noble Viscount had followed the discussion of the Bill, he would have been aware that this question of including leaseholders has, on more than one occasion, been made a subject of discussion.

Viscount LYMINGTON (Devon, South Molton): I have followed the discussion of the Bill closely, and I can assure my hon. Friend that I did not mean to say that the question was one which had escaped attention.

Mr. BUCHANAN: I do not understand that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, in rejecting this Amendment, has announced his intention of shutting out these leaseholders from all the benefits of the Bill. On the contrary, I gather that there are other benefits in the Bill which they will share, especially in reference to the extension of their holdings. The Amendment of the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherland (the Marquess of Stafford) would, however, relieve the one grievance from which the leaseholders in the Highlands have most suffered, and of which they have most loudly complained. What do the Crofters Commission say on the subject? On page 43 of their Report they say—

> "The isolated crofter deserves our solicitude as well as his associated brethren, though it may be more difficult to meet his necessities and satisfy his demands. Many of these crofters hold under leases of the common kind, and their most urgent complaint is of excessive rents."

The Commissioners, as we know, were not able to recommend the fixing of fair rents by an outside authority in their Report. And therefore they confined themselves, as they were unable to suggest a statutory remedy to meet the claim on behalf of the leaseholding crofters, to the expression of a hope that the indulgence of proprietors would be extended to them. The present Bill of the Government, however, does propose the fixing of fair rents, and deals also with excessive rents. Unfortunately, it only deals with that matter in the case of crofter tenants, and it omits to do so in the case of leaseholding tenants, which class suffer the same grievance, and ought to have their interests equally considered.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I desire to point out to the Committee that this Bill is drawn mainly upon the lines of the Irish Land Act. The only point in which it differs is in reference to rent value. By the Land Act of 1881 it makes no difference whether the tenant is evicted for non-payment of one year's rent or 20 years' rent. In this Bill that is not so; and another point upon which the measure distinctly differs from the Irish Land Act of 1881 is in the way in which it deals with leaseholders. The Lord Advocate is in error when he says that the acceptance of an Amendment such as that which has been moved by the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherland (the Marquess of Stafford) will create a new principle. There are two provisions in the Irish Land Act which have reference to leaseholders. The first is, when a person who holds a lease can come into Court and prove that the lease was forced upon him by a threat of eviction; in which case he is entitled to have it set aside, and to have the same benefit under the Act as if he were a present tenant, being awarded a practical perpetuity of tenure, with a right of compensation for improvements. The second provision in the Irish Land Act has reference to the case of a tenant whose lease comes to a natural termination. In that case, also, the tenant is to be treated as a present tenant, and he becomes a tenant from year to year, with a fair rent fixed. I cannot for the life of me see why some such provision should not be introduced into the Crofters Bill. The only possible reason which suggests itself is, that the Bill is the result of some kind of compromise between the two Front Benches. It has already been noticed that not a single Amendment of importance has been accepted by the Government, and the only Amendments which have been introduced have related to very small matters indeed, and have generally been proposed by hon. Members sitting on the Conservative Benches. That is an extraordinary fact, but it is undoubtedly true. I think it would save the time of the Committee if the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate were to stand up in his place and tell the Committee that he is really not a free agent in the matter. At the same time, I trust that the noble Marquess will press his Amendment to a division. The Amendment is of such a character that it will enable the country to judge who is and who is not the crofter's friend; and I think there is no better way of bringing that matter to a test than by taking an early division. I would ask the Committee to measure the Liberalism and Radicalism of some of the hon. Members who are responsible for the Bill, by the provisions of the measure itself, and I believe that the country will not feel inclined to ignore the fact on some future occasion.

Mr. BEITH (Glasgow, Central): I do not altogether agree with the wording of the Amendment of the noble Marquess. I do not think that it is quite happy. The Amendment, however, of the hon. Member for North-East Lanarkshire (Mr. D. Crawford) is not, I think, open to the same objection. The hon. Member appears to have carefully considered the spirit and principle of the Act, and to have worded his Amendment in such a manner as to bring it in keeping with that principle. It, therefore, appears to me desirable that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate should reconsider his decision. If he could see his way to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for North-East Lanarkshire, he would do what many hon. Members on this side of the House desire, without involving an alteration of the principle of the Bill to any appreciable extent. I would, therefore, advise the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherland (the Marquess of Stafford) not to press his Amendment just now, but to allow the Committee to take up the question when we reach the Amendment of the hon. Member for North-East Lanarkshire further on.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I hope that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will not be induced to reconsider his determination on this point, but that he will adhere to the opinion he has already expressed on the Amendment. To interfere with existing leases would be an infraction of one of the main principles on which the Bill has been introduced, and would induce us on this side of the House to consider seriously our position in regard to the Bill. Hon. Members here have been anxious, subject to certain minor alterations which were pointed out early in the discussion, to give a general and cordial support to this measure; and that is the course they desire to continue to pursue to the end. I hope, therefore, that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will not be induced to alter his decision on this point. If an Amendment of this kind were accepted, we might have to reconsider our position in regard to the Bill. The hon. Member on the other side of the House (Dr. McDonald) certainly laid down what appears to me to be a novel principle in legislation, when he stated that it was the duty of the Committee not to consider in any way the consequences that would follow from their legislation. For my own part, I should have thought that if there was one duty more incumbent on the Committee than another, it is most carefully to consider all the consequences that are likely to follow from their legislation. But, although I differ entirely from the hon. Member upon that point, there was one remark he made in which I cordially concur, and that is when he recommended that the Committee should take a division upon this question as soon as possible; and it was only because I thought that the Committee might, with advantage, take that course at once, that I rose to take part in the debate.

Mr. M'LAGAN (Linlithgow): I did not cordially approve of the Amendment of the noble Marquess when I saw it on the Paper; but I now feel less disposed than I was at first to support it, after the suggestion of the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty (Dr. McDonald), that the limit should be raised to £50. The hon. Member said—"Why stop at £30? Why not raise it to £50?" In the same way, I would ask why, if we go up to £50, should we not make it £100, or £1,000, in which case you would introduce the system of altering the whole rental of the country? I say that you ought not to do that by a side wind, and by introducing it into a Bill of this kind. I am quite ready to support a Bill for the readjustment of the rents of farms under leases, including those at £30 and £50 rent, or above those sums. But what I say is that this is not a Bill in which that can be done; and if you do it in this Bill up to £30, you may be introducing a principle which will be brought to bear afterwards, when it comes to be a question of the larger tenancies. Under these circumstances, I must vote against the Amendment. But before I sit down, I would earnestly press upon the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate the desirability of endeavouring to introduce into the Bill the provisions of the Irish Land Act. He would have my cordial support there, because I think that something should be done for those crofters who are under leases below £30. But although I am prepared to support the right hon. and learned Gentleman to that extent, after listening to the remarks of the hon. Member (Dr. McDonald), I certainly feel myself called upon to vote against the Amendment.

Dr. R. McDONALD: May I be allowed to say that I did not make that proposal at all.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I think the Committee ought to bear in mind the announcement which has just been made by the right hon. Member for Sleaford (Mr. Chaplin), that as the Bill stands it has, and will have, the cordial support of hon. Members on that side of the House. I trust that they will also bear in mind the Notice which has been given to the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate of the consequences which will result from his acceptance of the Amendment—namely, that by so doing he would earn the opposition of the Tory Party. Now, that is the course which has been taken throughout in regard to this Bill. At any rate, that was the inference I drew from the beginning, and now it is clearly announced from the Front Bench that my view was correct. It is announced from the Front Bench opposite that the Government are not to depend upon Tory support, unless they absolutely and inflexibly adhere to the wording of the Bill. I do not propose to stand between the Committee and the division which must necessarily take place upon the Amendment. I very much regret that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has not accepted any reasonable Amendment—even the reasonable suggestion which I made that he should adopt the principle embodied in the Irish Land Act of 1881.

Mr. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I think this Committee ought not to hesitate in going, at least, as far as the provisions of the Irish Land Act. I only intend to intrude upon the Committee for a few moments, and all I desire to say is, that I and everyone whom I can influence personally will give a cordial support to the proposal of the noble Marquess. We consider that the small leaseholders, whose case has been brought before the Committee, have been forced into engagements which they no longer desire to abide by, and which their instincts all along have repudiated. Surely we are not to be held down by any mere palaver about the sacredness of contract. [*Laughter.*] Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House laugh and ridicule the mere mention of the sacredness of contract; but has not that principle been violated from day to day? What is contract, if the contract interferes with the individual liberty of a single member of the community, or with the well-being of that community? Then I say that contract ought not for a moment to be allowed to stand in the way of legislation. You have recognized this principle before, although you are content to laugh at it to-night. I maintain that this Bill is a retrogressive measure. You recognized the principle I desire to enforce, although I admit it was only in a halting manner, in the Irish Land Act. We appeal to you to-night to recognize the same principle now—at least as far as it was recognized by the Irish Land Act—by trying to relieve those persons who have been forced to seal their own doom upon parchment. I shall heartily and cordially vote for the Amendment of the noble Marquess, or for any proposal in the same direction. It appears to me that the votes and divisions upon the Bill, as far as they have gone, have been marked almost by a repulsive amount of tameness. Hon. Members have pretended to entertain strong feelings for the people whose interests are to be benefited by the Bill, and yet they have shrunk from giving full effect to their opinions. There has been a little talk and a few trifling divisions, but nothing whatever has been gained. If anything whatever has been gained, it has been gained in a wrong direction; and if a division upon the Amendment of the noble Marquess will have no other effect, we can, by recording our votes in favour of it, even if we are in a minority of 20, say that we have voted in support of a proper principle.

Sir JOHN RAMSDEN (Yorks, W.R., Osgold-cross): I cannot see how the Government can accept this Amendment. As I understand the principle of the Bill, it is to deal with the special case of an unfortunate class of the community known as crofters in Scotland. But if the noble Marquess's Amendment is accepted, instead of treating these cases as exceptional, we should lay down a rule that every tenant under £30 a-year in these crofting parishes—that is to say throughout the whole of the North of Scotland—is to hold at a rent fixed not by contract, but by a Government Department. I should like to know, supposing the Committee were to accept this principle, how long it would be before the same question would be raised in other parts of Scotland, and probably in England as well? It would be, in my opinion, the introduction of a principle which would tend in a most dangerous manner to break down the whole system of free contract in the case of every tenure under £30. I cannot, therefore, believe, this being a principle utterly foreign to the intentions with which the Bill was framed, that the Government will consent to accept such an Amendment.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I am sorry that I cannot give a silent vote upon this occasion. I can assure the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate that the rejection of the Amendment of the noble Marquess, which extends the benefit of this clause to existing leases under £30, will be one of the greatest disappointments which the Government can inflict upon the agricultural community of Scotland. I am also satisfied that this principle will have to come up again, and very soon, and, therefore, that they need not be so very much alarmed at the introduction of the principle now. I did not hear the statement of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate very distinctly; but I have listened to other hon. Members who also oppose the Amendment, and I failed to hear a single argument or statement which showed that crofters under leases are less deserving persons than crofters who hold from year to year. On the contrary, all I was able to hear was that crofters under leases are the more deserving class of the two, and the one which most requires consideration at our hands, because they are probably, on the whole, the better tenants of the two. I will only express my strong desire that the Amendment should be carried to a division; and if it is said that it is a novel one, and that it introduces a new principle into the Bill, I would ask the Committee to consider what would be the use of passing the Bill at all, if it was not intended to introduce something new? If it is only intended to continue the existing state of things, the Bill is not of the slightest use whatever. The only way in which it can be made a really satisfactory measure is by amending it in such a manner that it should benefit, not only a small number of persons, but the general body of the community who now exist in the crofting parishes.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I think it is a most important question whether the provisions of the Bill should be made to extend to those crofters who hold under leases. I am certainly of opinion that it is most desirable to include leaseholders under £30 in the provisions of the Bill. They are precisely of the same class as those for whom direct provision is made, with this difference only—that those to whom it is proposed to extend the benefits of the Bill hold from year to year, while those to whom the benefits of the measure are not extended hold under leases. Now, I am unable to see what distinction there is in principle between the two. I do not see why a tenant who holds from year to year is entitled to more consideration, with respect to fixity of tenure and free rent, than the tenant who holds under a lease. Reference has been made to the Irish Land Act of 1881; but, if I am not mistaken, the Irish Land Act did not include tenants under leases. I think that that was one of the great defects of the Irish Land Act; and it was with very great satisfaction that I noticed at the time of the General Election a speech of the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) at Belfast, in which he expressed himself as being of opinion that the Irish Land Act might be advantageously amended, so as to include leaseholders. I trust that the House of Commons will not be deterred from giving that provision to this deserving class until it becomes too late. I quite agree that tenants who hold under leases are a more deserving class than those who hold from year to year. There is more to hope from them than from the yearly tenants; and I think that it would be a most unnecessary and injudicious curtailment if the benefits of this measure were not extended so as to include persons who really belong to the same class, but who hold under leases instead of from year to year.

MR. A. R. D. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): I wish to make one or two observations before the Committee proceed to a division. It is all very well for the hon. Member (Mr. Barclay) to say that leaseholders are a better class of tenants than the crofters who do not hold under leases; but we must go a little beyond that, and consider that class of tenants who desire to take land upon lease. What we are asked to do now is to aim a very severe blow at the leasehold system—a system which has been of the greatest benefit to Scotland—by depriving the lease of its durability. In the great speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) in introducing the Irish Land Bill, one of his strongest arguments against this principle was that it would place the occupiers of land in Ireland in the position of leaseholders in Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman—I remember the passage in his speech—distinctly said there was to be a sort of *quasi*-lease, and that it was by something of that kind that he hoped to benefit the people. My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) read a quotation from the Report of the Royal Commission; but he stopped suddenly, without concluding the whole of the Commissioners' remarks. I wish he had gone a little further. If he had I am afraid he would have found very little in support of his view. Immediately after the words quoted by my hon. Friend the Commissioners proceed to say—

> "It is in this particular that we cannot come to their relief. That these covenanted rents are in many cases high when contracted for in the past years of comparative prosperity and eager competition we can well believe; such has been the case with other orders of occupiers, and over all Scotland; but we are not able to recommend the annulment of existing contracts by Act of Parliament. We must in such cases trust to the discretion and indulgence of proprietors, which have been extensively exercised in regard to large farms by remission and reduction of rent."

I believe that my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh) was one of the Commissioners, although he did not sign the Report; but I presume that he sanctioned the conclusion at which his brother Commissioners arrived. [An hon. MEMBER: That was three years ago.] Three years ago. Yes; but this is a question of public importance, and I want to know if it is not for the advantage of a person who wishes to farm land that he should be able to obtain the land by making a bargain with the landlord? The question is a most important one, and I think the thanks of the Committee are due to the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate for the determined stand he has made against the Amendment.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Edinburgh, Central): The question before us is what amount of alleviation the Bill will give. It was purposely brought in to alleviate distress and allay discontent in the crofting districts of Scotland. I may tell the Committee that in the crofting districts of Scotland there are two kinds of holders—the crofter who holds from year to year, and the leaseholder; and it has been proved that the leaseholders have been suffering even more than the annual tenants, and yet under the Bill no prospect of alleviation whatever of their distress is held out. It is, therefore, essential that the Amendment of the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherland (the Marquess of Stafford) or of the hon. Member for North-East Lanarkshire (Mr. D. Crawford) should be adopted; but, on the whole, I think the last the best. I earnestly hope, however, that the Committee will vote in favour of the Amendment of my noble Friend, in order to ensure that the matter will be dealt with in some way, and so prevent an amount of distress and discontent which the Bill, as it stands, would undoubtedly perpetuate.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I think that we are treading on the verge of very dangerous ground indeed. All the Committee have heard during the last few minutes is to the effect that if a man has made a bad bargain, he ought to be able to come to the House of Commons in order to get rid of it. If the Committee adopt the principle contained in the Amendment, I believe that many who are connected with leasehold property would come to this House for relief in order to get the covenants into which they have entered, and which have been signed, sealed, and delivered, broken because they are found not to pay, and which hitherto have been regarded as obligations. I am sure there are many persons in this country and Ireland, as well as in Scotland, who would only be too glad to repudiate the contracts into which they have entered, if they thought it right to do so, especially those in regard to the leasing of minerals and of agricultural property. The hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance) has alluded to the case of Ireland. What was originally done in the case of Ireland was to fix the rent for 15 years, and that was done without regard to good or bad seasons and crops. What is the state of Ireland at this day in consequence? You have the Irish tenants at this moment with 15 years' leases on their hands with all agricultural produce down both in quantity and price. And so also with regard to the Scottish crofters. We desire to do our best for them; but it seems to me that we are only going to make bad worse if we are to put the leaseholders into the Bill, and allow them to repudiate the covenants of their leases. The Scottish crofters, no doubt, have their grievances; but those grievances will not, I fear, be remedied by the Bill. As I said before, I think the Committee are treading on the verge of very dangerous ground, and I cannot vote for such an addition to the Bill.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 121; Noes 230: Majority 109.—(Div. List, No. 61.)

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The Amendment which I now propose is to leave out, in the 2nd sub-section to the clause, in page 4, line 4, the words "decision of," in order to insert the words "notice of application to." The clause, as it stands, provides that the—

> "Fixed rent shall be deemed to be the rent payable by the crofter as from the first term of *Whitsunday* or *Martinmas* next succeeding the decision of the Land Commission, and shall come in place of the present rent, and, save by mutual agreement, the rent so fixed shall not be altered for a period of fifteen years."

If my Amendment is adopted, the fixed rent will come in place of the present rent from the first term succeeding "the application to" instead of "the decision of" the Land Commission. I think it would be better to take some clearly defined period of fixing the rent, rather than leave it to the problematical date of the decision of the Court. The result of the present state of the law in Ireland is, that the tenant may be obliged to pay an unjust rent for years and then, when he succeeds in getting it fixed in his favour, he has no remedy and cannot recover the amount which has been extorted from him unjustly. I consider this to be an objectionable principle altogether. The ordinary rule of law is that the rights of the parties shall commence with the application to the Court. If a man brings an action to recover money, the rights of the parties are ascertained from the day on which the writ is issued; and I do not see why the same principle should not be adopted in the case of rent. In this case, also, the provisions of the Bill are very much worse than the provisions of the Irish Land Act. In the Act of 1881 there is a provision that, where application was made at the "first sitting" of the Commission, the rent shall run from the the date of the application to the Court. I may be told, of course, that the number of tenants or crofters who are to get the benefit of the provisions of this Bill are only some 30,000 or 40,000, whereas in the case of the Irish Act the interests of more than 1,000,000 tenants were involved; but I do not see that that is any reason why the law should be more imperfect in the one case than in the other. Although there are only some 40,000 persons who are likely to get the benefit of this Bill, I do not see why their interests should be injuriously affected, because from difficulty of access in the district, or from some other cause, it is possible that the decision of the Court may be postponed. That is a case which often occurs in Ireland, and will probably occur also in Scotland. I therefore submit the Amendment to the consideration of the Committee.

Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 4, to leave out "decision of," and insert "notice of application to."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'decision of' stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I quite understand the ground on which this Amendment is proposed, and I think the hon. Member who moved it was evidently prepared for certain practical difficulties of a very serious kind. I will briefly state what the difficulties are, and I will then explain the Amendment which I propose to move myself. I quite see that if it were practicable to allow the rent as settled and fixed to run from the date of the application, it would be very just in itself, because a movement has then been made, and the matter has become contentious. But I must point out that the great practical difficulty in the way of accepting the Amendment as it stands would be that the payment of rent would necessarily cease simultaneously with the application, because, until a decision was pronounced, the landlord would not know what rent he was entitled to demand, nor would the tenant know what rent he was bound to pay. It would be impossible, therefore, to maintain an action for rent, and the presenting of an application would practically involve, if I may use such an expression, a judicial strike against rent for the period which might be requisite to enable a decision to be come to. It would prevent the payment of any rent at all until a fair rent was fixed by the Court. I do not think that would be right, and I am quite sure the hon. Member will see that it would go far beyond anything that has been done in Ireland. At the same time, I think the matter might be met by making an alteration in the Amendment which stands on the next page in the name of the hon. Member for East Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear). That Amendment provides that—

> "The lodging of an application to the Land Commission to fix a fair rent shall operate *ipso facto* as a sist of all proceedings for the removal of the crofter till the said application is finally determined."

I propose to amend that Amendment by substituting words giving power to the Land Commission, on the application of the tenant to fix fair rent, to sist proceedings for the removal of a crofter until the application should be finally determined, upon such terms as the payment of rent or otherwise as they should see fit. The effect of that would be that if any person did not settle with his landlord, and his landlord was proposing to remove him for non-payment of the old rent, it would be in his power to go to the Land Commission and plead that the rent was too high. The Land Commission, in entertaining that plea, would be entitled to ask whether the crofter was going to pay any rent at all, and if he said his rent was £7, whereas he thought it should be only £4, then the Commission could direct him to pay the £4, and let the other stand over, or it might be that they would fix a higher *interim* payment. What makes me hesitate in accepting the Amendment of the hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance) is that it would have the absolute effect of making the rent non-payable, practically irrecoverable, to any extent. But by such an Amendment as I propose, there would be a certain amount of flexibility given to the matter, and, pending the decision of the Court, there would be a ready means of ordering payment of a portion of the rent. The Land Court might take time to consider, but the delay would not prevent payment of rent altogether.

MR. CHANCE: I did see the difficulty which has been pointed out by the right hon. and learned Gentleman; but I would suggest to him one way by which I think it may be met. As the matter now stands the provision of the Bill might possibly nullify the whole of the benefit which would result from the measure. I clearly see the difficulty, and I saw it when I put the Amendment down upon the Paper; but I thought of proposing to add to the sub-section a subsequent provision declaring the present rent to be payable subject to the excess, in the event of a judicial reduction, being refunded.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I would suggest to the hon. Member that he should not press the Amendment now, but wait and see the Amendment which I intend to propose. The idea of a rebate did occur to me; but I thought my own proposal was the less hard and the more merciful of the two. The hon. Member's proposal would compel the tenant to pay the money, and lie out of it for some time, although he might possibly get it back again. I think it would be much better to accept my proposal. The tenant in that case would retain a portion of the money, which would not be so great a hardship as parting with all of it. As a matter of fact, the crofter would never have to part with more than appeared *primâ facie* to be right.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I understand that the right hon. and learned Gentleman himself proposes to deal with the matter on the lines of the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear). Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman say exactly what the words of the Amendment he proposes to move are?

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I propose to substitute for the first three lines of the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Fife—namely,

> "The lodging of an application to the Land Commission to fix a fair rent shall operate *ipso facto* as a sist of all proceedings for removal of the crofer till the said application is finally determined,"

something to this effect—

> "When an application is lodged with the Land Commission to fix a fair rent, it shall be in the power of the Land Commission, on the application of the crofter, to sist all proceedings for the removal of the crofter till the said application is finally determined, upon such terms as to payment of rent or otherwise as they shall think fit."

The effect of such a provision would be that the Land Commission would take a kind of payment on account, and would allow the rest to stand over until the termination of the proceedings. It appears to me that that would be of more advantage to the crofter than to have the whole of the present rent impounded.

MR. CHANCE: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman consider the propriety of giving the crofter the option of paying and taking the rebate when the rent is fixed?

THE LORD ADVOCATE: Certainly.

MR. CHANCE: He will be a better judge than the Land Court.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: Certainly, I will consider the matter.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I had placed upon the Table an Amendment similar to that which has been proposed by the hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance); and I certainly think the Committee ought to lay down the principle that the newly-adjusted rent should date from the time of the application. That principle is so just that I am surprised the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate should object to it. There ought also to be a provision that that principle does not absolve the tenant from his liability to pay the rent. All I ask is that the Committee should lay down the principle that the new rent should date from the time of the application of the tenant to the Land Commission to fix a fair rent, and then, if it is considered desirable, there should be the further provision suggested by the right hon. and learned Gentleman, that the Committee should have power to declare what portion of the rent should go back to the tenant.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I may point out to my hon. Friend that what I have suggested is, that a provision should be inserted requiring that, in the event of a payment having been made by the tenant, in excess of the rent which might ultimately be determined to be fair, there should be a rebate going back to the date of the application to the Land Commission to fix a fair rent.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I think it would be a very great pity, indeed, if effect could not be given to the spirit of the hon. Member's Amendment in some way or other. All I would say now, without committing myself to a decided preference for either proposal, is that I consider the proposal of the hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance) much nearer safety, if my right hon. and learned Friend will pardon me for saying so, than the proposal made by my right hon. and learned Friend to alter the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear).

THE LORD ADVOCATE: The object of my suggestion is to provide an alternative.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY: Do I understand the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate to say that he intends to apply the principle of the Amendment to the Bill? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman go as far as that?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I hope that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will not wait until the Report before he deals with this question. I think that it ought to be dealt with in Committee, and perhaps the proper opportunity for disposing of it will be when we reach the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear).

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): Before we go further, I want to know what the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate means by intimating his acceptance of the principle of the Amendment. I wish to know if he is prepared to accept the principle of restitution under all circumstances, no matter what the accumulation in the shape of arrears may be, or whether he only intends to apply the principle to the current year? The latter part of the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear) distinctly opens the question of arrears, and not only provides that arrears shall be dealt with, but that the Land Commission shall take an account of the amount of arrears due, or to become due, before the application is finally determined, and shall decide whether, in view of the circumstances of the case, the whole or what part of the arrears ought in equity to be paid. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that as well as the arrears for the current year?

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I think the provision should apply to the whole arrears.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. FULLER (Wiltshire, Westbury): The Amendment which stands in my name is as follows:—To insert, after the word "agreement," in page 4, line 5 of the clause, the following words:—

> "Or until the crofter on application to the Land Commission can show that, owing to a decrease in the prices of agricultural produce in the locality, as compared with similar prices at the time when the rent was fixed, and from causes not merely temporary or casual, he is unable to pay such rent."

The Committee will observe that, in this Amendment, there is introduced the principle of affording an opportunity to the tenant of having his rent reviewed and altered during the period of 15 years, if, owing to circumstances over which he has no control, he finds himself unable to continue the payment of the fixed rent. I understand the Government to admit that the prices of agricultural produce are to be an element in the calculation of a fair rent. By this Amendment, the only cause for altering a rent will be the fact that there has been a diminution in the prices of agricultural produce. There is only to be one variation in the rent during a period of 15 years, and, in order that the tenant may get his rent altered at all, the burden of proof will rest upon him. The alteration of rent cannot be brought about by any temporary or casual circumstances. Now, as far as we have gone in considering the question of fair rent, it seems to me that the proposition which is put forward in the Amendment which I propose is rather an alternative proposition to that which has been proposed by the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark), and, as I understand, accepted by the Government, except that my Amendment deals only with a rent fixed for 15 years, and variable once only within that period of 15 years, whereas the Amendment of the hon. Member applies to a rent fixed for 15 years, but variable year by year according to the varying prices of agricultural produce. I think I ought to apologize to hon. Members who represent the Northern parts of Scotland for proposing to introduce this Amendment into the Bill, seeing that I do not represent a constituency in that part of the country; but I can assure hon. Members from Scotland that this question is looked upon with very great interest by the constituencies in England, because there is a very striking analogy between the crofters in the North of Scotland and the squatters in England. At the end of the last century and the beginning of this, the squatter in this country, like the crofter in Scotland, built his cottage upon waste land, and thereby obtained the privilege of pasturage on common land. Like the crofter, he has now been driven out of the rights he thus acquired, and been compelled to give up his particular cottage holding. I do not deny that the condition of the crofter is even somewhat worse than that of the squatter in England, because at the present moment, and for a long time past, the law has been very seriously against the crofter's interest. From time to time they have been driven out of the inland districts down to the sea-shore, and the only alternative offered them now is either to be driven into the sea or over the sea into some foreign country. Now, I maintain that there is ample room for these industrious persons to gain a decent livelihood upon the soil of this country. There is one other point I wish to lay before the Committee, and it is the fact that I approach this subject entirely from a landlord's point of view—being myself a landlord. Owing to peculiar circumstances, it has been my lot to inherit a property which has never been managed by any professional agent—certainly during this century—and it has been my duty during the last 15 years to conduct myself the management of the estate to which I refer in a business-like manner. From the experience which I have gained, I have learned the object and wants of the tenants. The tenants have come directly to me, without the interposition of any agent between themselves and their landlord, and I have consequently had a considerable opportunity of ascertaining the feeling of the tenants towards their landlords, from which I have been able to form an opinion as to what their feeling is in regard to a fair rent as between landlord and tenant. In the first place, I must take exception to some expressions which have been used by hon. Members on the other side of the House in regard to fair rent. They seem to consider that the fixing of a fair rent is a privilege conferred upon the tenant.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I rise to Order. I wish to ask whether the line of argument the hon. Gentleman is pursuing is strictly germane to the Amendment upon the Paper?

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid that it is a little discursive.

MR. FULLER: The object of my Amendment is to show that there is a way of arriving at a fair rent which is not included in the Bill—namely, by the adoption of a principle that, when the rent has been fixed by the Land Commission, there should be an opportunity afforded to the tenant of having the rent altered in the event of circumstances occurring over which he has no control. I have placed the Amendment on the Paper in order to give an opportunity to the Government, at all events, of considering the subject, and an opportunity of rectifying the blot which, to my mind, exists in the Land Act of 1881. In this case, it must be borne in mind that the whole principle by which a fair rent is to be arrived at between landlord and tenant is taken from the Irish Land Act. That principle is, that there should be a fair rent and fixity of tenure. I maintain that fair rent and fixity of tenure should go together; you cannot have one without the other; and if you give a fair rent to the tenant with fixity of tenure, you are offering him an inducement to enter on his land and cultivate it for his own benefit; but unless he has fixity of tenure, you place him in a position in which he might at any time be turned out of his holding, and the landlord might step in and take possession of the holding as improved by the tenant. If, on the other hand, you give to the tenant fixity of tenure without a fair rent, you render him liable to have an unjust and an unfair rent imposed upon him; and I maintain that it is impossible for any tenant to get a living with an unfair rent imposed upon him. The result in this case would be that he would have to take shelter under the 7th clause of the Bill and by giving up his holding get out of the farm as soon as possible. Therefore, in my opinion, the two things are tied up together, and fair rent and fixity of tenure must go together. As far as I can judge the Government are making an endeavour, in this Bill, to encourage the landlord to come to an agreement with his tenant, in the first place, and, in the second place, if the landlord and tenant cannot agree it becomes the duty of the Government, or rather of the State, to step in and see that a fair rent is given to the tenant on such conditions as are calculated to insure the preservation of law and order throughout the community.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must request the hon. Member to confine his argument to the Amendment, which is—

> "Or until the crofter on application to the Land Commission can show that, owing to a decrease on the prices of agricultural produce in the locality, as compared with similar prices at the time when the rent was fixed, and from causes not merely temporary or casual, he is unable to pay such rent."

MR. FULLER: One of the great reasons why I ask for this privilege to be given to the tenant is this. The Crofters Commission have constantly shown that a very large amount of poverty prevails among the crofters in the Highlands of Scotland, and I conceive that to be a strong reason why, when a fair rent has been once fixed at the agricultural prices of the day, if those prices become seriously diminished, the crofter ought, at all events, to have an opportunity of having his rent fixed again so as to enable him to meet the changed circumstances of agricultural prices. Of course, I am aware what the nature of the argument is which will be used against me. It will be said that if when agricultural prices are low the rent of the tenant is fixed in accordance with those prices, the landlord ought to have the right of altering rent when the prices of agricultural produce are high. I know it will be said—"Surely the landlord, when prices get higher, should have the advantage of obtaining more rent." But I maintain that we ought to take into consideration the special condition of the crofter, and the poverty amidst which he appears to be living, as one great reason why the State ought not to allow the rent to be raised during a period of 15 years—at any rate, more than once. There seems to me to be no stepping-stone—no means, on the part of the crofter, of attaining from the lowest and most abject poverty to a better position in life. We find in the Report of the Royal Commission an instance given of the parish of Farr, in Sutherland, in which they state that there are 295 crofters and cottars who paid a gross rental per annum of £681. Out of the total number, 288 pay a rent of less than £6 per annum; and while the highest croft pays £7 16*s*., the lowest farm stands for £290; and while 293 small occupiers represent an aggregate rental of £681, a small pastoral farmer, who is not a resident, holds lands of the annual value of £683; in addition to which he has a shooting tenancy of £200, and an angling tenancy of £100. Under such circumstances, how is it possible for a crofter to raise his condition so as to obtain a better living? The condition of the crofters must, therefore, be taken into consideration by the Government; and if the rent at the beginning of a holding is fixed at a low amount, there is strong reason, bearing in mind the poverty of the crofters, why it should not be raised during a period of 15 years. Of course, where there is a lease, if the rent is fixed at a low sum at the beginning of 15 years, it is a matter of mutual agreement that it shall not be raised during that period. There are other reasons why I think this Amendment is very much preferable to the one which has almost been adopted by the Government at the instance of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark)—namely, that the rent shall be regulated in accordance with the principle of the tithe rent-charge. I contend that the adoption of this Amendment would be for the interest not only of the tenant, but of the landlord as well, and that it would be far better to have the rents fixed in the way I suggest than to have them altered year by year in accordance with variations in the prices of agricultural produce. The tenant, at all events, would know that if his rent is once fixed it will not be altered for a period of 15 years, and he would consequently know exactly what he would have to pay. It would hardly be possible for the crofter to know what he would have to pay if the rent is to vary year by year; and there is nothing in the Amendment I propose which would prevent the landlord from coming to an agreement with the tenant. It does not interfere with any of the ordinary customs which prevail in the country, nor does it establish any new custom; and I venture to hope that it is a proposal which will be accepted by the Government.

Amendment proposed,

In page 4, line 5, after "agreement," insert "or until the crofter on application to the Land Commission can show that, owing to a decrease in the prices of agricultural produce in the locality, as compared with similar prices at the time when the rent was fixed, and from causes not merely temporary or casual, he is unable to pay such rent."—(*Mr. Fuller.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): I would suggest to the hon. Member not to press his Amendment at present. The Government are engaged in considering the terms of a clause it is proposed to introduce on Report which will have the effect of making the fixed rent to be paid by the crofter vary according to the yearly alterations of the average price of the produce of the farm, and if a clause of that description is adjusted and is satisfactory to the Committee, it will be quite unnecessary to deal with this matter in the way proposed by the Amendment. I therefore trust that the hon. Member will withdraw the Amendment.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I am glad to hear the statement of the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Asher), and I wish to impress upon the Government that it is absolutely necessary that something should be done in the direction indicated. I think the Committee are under great obligations to my hon. Friend the Member for Wiltshire (Mr. Fuller) for having brought the matter forward. I have an Amendment later down on the same subject, giving power to the Land Commission, with the consent of the Secretary for Scotland, to authorize a revision of rents, in the event of an excessive failure of crops or stock, or a falling off in the price of agricultural produce; but, after what the hon. and learned Solicitor General has said, I shall not press it. As the Bill stands now, it imposes on the tenant a long lease of 15 years, and in times of bad seasons and changing prices the tenant may experience considerable difficulty in keeping upon his legs. I am glad to find that the Government intend to consider both the Amendment of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) and that of the hon. Member for Wiltshire (Mr. Fuller), with a view of making some provision for varying the rent according to the changing prices of produce.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin): Does the hon. Member for Wiltshire (Mr. Fuller) withdraw his Amendment?

Mr. FULLER: Yes.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): The next Amendment stands in my name, and it provides that during the period for which rent is fixed an appeal may be taken to the Land Commission to have the rent altered, and that the appellant shall pay all expenses if he fail to prove his case. The Irish Land Act had two grave defects, one of which was that it fixed the rent for 15 years. It is now out of date to fix rents for a number of years without the opportunity of alteration. I think that in these days it is not too much to ask that the rent shall not be irrevocably fixed for so long a period, but that it should be left open for an application to be made to the Land Commission to alter the rent. This leaves it open either for the landlord or tenant to apply to the Land Commission, the neutral authority for fixing the rent; and as the Government have already promised that in the future rents shall be based to some extent on the price of agricultural produce, I hope they will never reach the condition in which they have been placed in the past, both in Scotland and Ireland.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member move the Amendment?

Mr. M'CULLOCH: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: As the words now stand they are inconsistent with the context of the clause.

Amendment proposed,

In page 4, line 6, leave out all after "shall," and add "only be altered by agreement or on appeal to the Land Commission, the appellant paying all expenses if he fail to prove his case."—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'shall not be altered for a period of fifteen years from such term' stand part of the Clause."

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. ASHER) (Elgin, &c.): I would appeal to the hon. Member whether there is any necessity for this Amendment, if a satisfactory clause is proposed to the Committee such as I indicated a few moments ago? In that case, the crofter would be in this position —a fair rent would be fixed, which could be altered, either by agreement or at the expiration of the term of 15 years, which is the term to be fixed by Statute, and then it would also be a rent which would fluctuate annually, according to the average annual value of the agricultural produce of the croft. What my hon. Friend proposes is, that there should be a power given at any time to the crofter to apply to the Commission to have a fair rent fixed. I think that would be very far from a satisfactory arrangement; because, of course, if the crofter applied under the plea that he was not satisfied with the rent owing to the fluctuation in the prices of agricultural produce, there is a great probability that the application would be made under circumstances which would not warrant its succeeding. The Amendment proposes that the unsuccessful applicant should become liable for the expenses of the application. That being so, the Amendment is an encouragement to the crofter to apply to the Land Commission to alter the rent; and, under the circumstances, there may be a great probability of the application being unsuccessful, with the unfortunate result of the tenant finding the application refused, and the costs being awarded against him. I hope the hon. Member will not press the Amendment.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I think the Amendment of the hon. Member simply carries out the spirit of the concession which has been made by the Government, that rent shall be fixed from time to time. It seems to me an absurd thing to fix rent for 15 years and not to provide for its alteration from year to year according to the current price of agricultural produce. Such a proposition I can hardly support.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Does my hon. Friend intend by the Amendment to give the landlord the right of raising the rent of his tenant upon an application to the Land Commission? [Mr. M'CULLOCH: Yes.] Then I certainly entertain strong objections to such a proposal. At the same time, I do not think the Committee need very much trouble themselves with what is likely to happen beyond the next five years; because I do not think the Bill, if it becomes an Act, will last that time. It is for that reason that I think the Committee may accept the provisions of the Bill, for I hardly think the price of agricultural produce is likely to fall very much within that period. But the Land Commission may probably take a wider view of the subject, and take into consideration the varying price of other commodities. The right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has laid down the proposition that the crofters are going to convert themselves into fishermen, and therefore the Commission may have to consider the price of fish. Although there may be difficulties in the way, theoretically it is quite possible that the price of labour may increase quite as fast as the price of agricultural produce, in which case it would also form an element. Although, at first sight, it may be considered fair to regulate the rent of the holding by the price of agricultural produce, the fact must also be taken into account that there may be an increase of cost in production.

MR. M'CULLOCH: At least we have the promise that the price of produce will, in some shape, be made the basis of rent. In the present combination of Whigs and Tories, it would be a waste of time to divide the Committee, and I will, therefore, withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I merely propose to move the next Amendment which stands in my name formally, It is to provide that the period of 15 years for which the fixed rent is to run shall be reduced to five years, and I move it in order to hear from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate what the precise intention of the Government is. Until I hear what that intention is, I do not feel disposed to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 6, leave out "fifteen," and insert "five."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That 'fifteen' stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): The term of fifteen years has been put into the Bill for two reasons—in the first place, because it nearly approximates to the period of 19 years common in Scotch leases; and, also, because it is the period fixed in the Irish Act. Further, it was thought that it would avoid the instability which might result from the too frequent alteration of the rent. But since the clause was drawn up, it has been represented by many persons of great experience that probably a period of 15 years is too long, and I am inclined to that view myself from what I have heard. Two hon. Members have put down Amendments on the Paper to fix the period at seven years, and, if it is agreeable to the Committee, I will be glad to adopt that period.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeenshire, E.): I think that if the Government are going to agree to an automatic system of rent, according to the price of produce in each year, it is unnecessary and inconsistent to fix rent for any particular number of years. It would be better not to put down any period at all.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): It certainly appears to me that all these Amendments hang together. If we are to have an automatic mode of altering rents, and if we are to adhere to it, then it seems to me that seven years is too long for the tenant, and probably too short for the landlord, so far as Scotland is concerned. If we are to have an automatic method, I agree with the hon. Member for East Aberdeenshire (Mr. Esslemont) that it is hardly worth while to fix the rent for any particular number of years.

Mr. CHANCE: May I ask whether the Government, in addition to reducing the period from 15 years to seven, intend to provide an automatic method of altering the rent? [The Lord Advocate: Yes.] Then, Sir, I will withdraw the Amendment.

The LORD ADVOCATE: Let me point out what it was that my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General said. He said that, while the automatic mode would be best, it was by no means inconsistent, nor would it dispense with the necessity of fixing the rent for a number of years. The automatic system would only say how much is to be paid under or over the fixed fair rent; but there might be other considerations which would make it proper to lower or raise the rent at particular periods. I am afraid that the adoption of the one course will hardly do away with the necessity for the other; but I am quite willing to leave the matter over until the Report.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I wish to understand at what period the Government propose that the automatic system shall be adopted? Is it to be annually? [The Lord Advocate: Yes, certainly.] Then it does not matter what length of time is put in the Bill.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I do not think that it would be wise to limit the term to a period of seven years, and it occurs to me that the tenants themselves would not be satisfied with that short period. I think that 12 years would be more acceptable. I speak from some experience of the matter, because in my part of the country the custom is to take a lease for 19 years; but considering the circumstances of the times, and the extreme uncertainty as to the price of agricultural produce, I think that nowadays 12 years would be a more acceptable term in many parts of the country than 19 years. I am disposed to think that the crofters themselves would prefer 12 years to seven.

Sir DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): I have an Amendment on the Paper to reduce the term from 15 years to seven, and I hope that hon. Gentlemen opposite will agree to that term, which has already been accepted by Her Majesty's Government. I believe that seven years would give general satisfaction, and I trust that the Committee will accept the Amendment I intend to propose, The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for South Kilkenny withdraw the Amendment?

Mr. CHANCE: Yes.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: Before the Amendment is withdrawn, I should like to have a little further explanation from the Government. I very much doubt the possibility of altering the rent year by year. I think it would only be possible to alter the rent satisfactorily and with good effect when the change becomes permanent, and the result of prices extending over a series of years is taken.

Mr. BEITH (Glasgow, Central): I will take this case. The crofter encounters a bad season, and he has to provide himself with oats at a high price. He has, therefore, a high price to pay for produce, and a high rent to pay besides, and, consequently, he has double need of a reduction. Where the tenant has a large farm, the case may be different; but, even there, it is not very different, because if the prices he receives are low, it is because the quantity is large, and if he has a good harvest, he can afford to take lower prices and still be able to pay his rent. The more I think of the matter, the greater do the difficulties appear.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I take it that, strictly speaking, the Committee should discuss, in connection with the Amendment, the automatic system which the Government propose to adopt; but I am far from desiring to do so in any detail. But the hon. Member, who has repeated some of the arguments used by other hon. Members, is quite right in saying that the question will have to be dealt with, and with the utmost caution. I hope that, in giving a general assent to the principle that rents are to vary with external circumstances, we are not committing ourselves to any special provision to make it easy or difficult for the crofter to pay his rent. The more I think over the matter the more difficult does the working of the principle appear to be.

Mr. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will, before abandoning either the fixed or movable period, consider what fees the tenant would have to pay for the reconsideration of his rent by the Land Commission. If the holder of a small croft has to pay fees for getting his rent reduced, the fees might be greater than the reduction would probably be for the whole seven years. Therefore, without impugning or objecting in any way to the principle of making the rent vary according to the fluctuating price of agricultural produce, which is to be the basis for fixing the rent, the payment of the necessary fees in connection with the application to the Land Commission will be an important element for consideration.

Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): I would make an appeal to the right hon. and learned Gentleman, that if he is going to introduce the principle that the rent should depend upon the varying prices of agricultural produce from year to year, he ought to give a good long notice of the clause which he intends to propose, because the matter is one that will have a large effect in England as well as in Scotland. If we do anything of this kind, we must adopt the Italian mezzeria system, by which the rent varies with the produce of the farm, which is, after certain deductions, equally divided between landlord and tenant. Unless we adopt a plan of that kind, we shall find it impossible to establish a fair system. I therefore ask the right hon. Gentleman to give long notice of his proposal for altering the present system.

Mr. J. E. JOHNSON-FERGUSON (Leicester, Loughborough): I hope the Government will be able to see their way to accepting the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Perthshire (Sir Donald Currie), which proposes to reduce the term from 15 to seven years, rather than adopt the system of variable rental from year to year. Anyone who has had any experience of the difficulties incident to the calculation and the collection of the corn tithe rent-charge, which is based upon these variable prices, will realize the immense difficulty there will be in convincing the crofters—many of whom will have to pay very small sums in the shape of rent—of what the exact amount of that rent ought to be in each year. In Lancashire, where the corn tithe rent-charge is paid, in a great many instances, on exceedingly small plots of land, I have myself found the very greatest difficulty in convincing the persons who have to pay these small tithe rent-charges of the amount upon which they ought to be calculated in each year. I am, therefore, sure that we shall find, if the system is adopted of fixing the rent annually upon the high or low prices of agricultural produce, or in accordance with any other variable prices, it will be almost impossible to convince the crofter what the exact amount is which, year by year, ought to be paid. I think it would be a very much better plan to reduce the term, as proposed by the hon. Member for West Perthshire, from 15 years down to seven or even to five years, rather than to make it a variable rent from year to year.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin): It would be irregular to go on with a discussion about fixing rent by produce, as the only question before the Committee is that of payment on a term of years.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Sir DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name to reduce the term from 15 to seven years.

Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 6, to leave out "fifteen," and insert "seven."—(*Sir Donald Currie.*)

Question proposed, "That 'fifteen' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I did not quite understand your ruling, Sir, in reference to the question of produce. Will it bar discussion on the fixed period or annual rent?—because the question of produce is one of annual rent, while the question of the fixed period is one of a number of years. The former, I think, would break down in practice, and what I want to see is a short period fixed.

The CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Member that the question he has to discuss is whether 15 or seven should be inserted in the clause.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Then, in that case, I will move as an Amendment to seven to substitute five.

The CHAIRMAN: The first thing it is necessary to do is to strike out "fifteen." If "fifteen" is negatived "seven" will become the Main Question, and the hon. Member will have his opportunity.

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I have also an Amendment on the Paper to substitute seven for 15. The experience of the working of the Irish Land Act has, I think, proved that 15 years is far too long a term, and it would be much more reasonable if the Government would give us a sliding scale. It has been said, over and over again, that a sliding scale will not work; but if it is found that that is so, we could fall back upon the principle of a term of years. I trust that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will agree that seven years, under any circumstances, is a term quite long enough.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness): I entirely agree with the Amendment of the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty (Dr. R. McDonald).

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I would suggest to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate that it is advisable to postpone the consideration of the number of years until we know what the Government intend to propose with regard to the sliding-scale.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): No; I think not. It does not appear to me that the two things necessarily hang together. There is a general feeling in the Committee and elsewhere that conditions may vary so much in 15 years that what might be thought proper at the beginning might not be proper at the end; and there appears to be a general feeling that seven years should fix the mean between what is too long and what is too short a period.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I do not know what the circumstances are to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman alludes, and which are to vary in the course of 15 years. There may be some, but I do not at this moment see what they are. There appears to be a difficulty which has obliged or induced several hon. Members to discuss an Amendment which appears on the next page in the name of the hon. Member for Bermondsey (Mr. Thorold Rogers); but I thought the question before the Committee was the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Perthshire (Sir Donald Currie). The Committee generally appear to think that the question of a long or a short term is inextricably bound up with a sliding-scale, and that suggests the question whether it would not be the best plan to drop for the moment the question of the term rent until we have settled whether there is to be a sliding scale or not. I would, therefore, suggest that the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty (Dr. R. McDonald) should drop his Amendment until he knows the fate of that which has been moved by the hon. Member for West Perthshire, and finds whether it is necessary to propose any further limitation of the term.

Dr. R. McDONALD: I do not see why we should not fix the term now; it would not in any way interfere with the sliding scale.

Sir DONALD CURRIE: I agree that it is on Report that the question with regard to the sliding scale is to be settled, and I have no objection to the course which the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has promised to take. But, at the same time, we have to consider whether the period mentioned in the Bill should be retained or reduced. I am of opinion, and so are a good many crofters with whom I have spoken, that the period should be seven years, and I trust that the Government will agree to place that term in the Bill.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I do not know whether the hon. Member for Bermondsey (Mr. Thorold Rogers) intends to move the Amendment of which he has given Notice; but I hope he will not do so, and allow the matter to stand over to Report. I think it would be very much better for the Committee to go a long way to get rid of the present difficulty by adopting the Amendment which Her Majesty's Government have expressed their willingness to accept. I do hope the hon. Member will not think it necessary to divide the Committee upon his Amendment.

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey): The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy has spoken about six times with reference to the very Amendment which I am about to move, and on those six occasions he has been entirely, continuously, and incessantly irrelevant. That is, of course, owing to the enormous amount of knowledge which he has on the subject. I quite agree with the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate that the two things—the sliding scale and the term of years proposed—are not compatible; because it might be necessary to revise the bargain made seven years ago. But the question is entirely distinct from that which is the subject of my Amendment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in page 4, at the end, to add—

"(3.) Where the Land Commission shall judicially fix a rent, which shall be less in amount than the present rent, the crofter shall be entitled in the next payment of rent to deduct from the amount of the judicial rent such sum or sums as he may have paid over and above the amount of the judicial rent between the date of the notice of application to fix the judicial rent and the date when such rent was fixed."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): It seems to me that with one very slight verbal alteration we might agree to this Amendment, which would give effect to what was discussed a little time ago on the matter of rebate. But I venture to point out that as the Amendment stands it makes the payment applicable, not to the period for which the judicial rent is running, and there might have been an old rent payable for a prior period which was only then paid. I would suggest that after the phrase "judicial rent" occurring in the Amendment the second time the words "in respect of the period" should be inserted.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): We understand that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has undertaken to deal with this question on Report, and I think it would be more convenient that it should be so. The Amendment of the hon. Member is not on the Paper. We are quite willing to pass it, on the understanding that it will be dealt with on Report.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I would prefer that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate should go on with the Amendment now. I am rather distrustful of settlements on Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 4, at the end, to add—

"(3.) Where the Land Commission shall judicially fix a rent, which shall be less in amount than the present rent, the crofter shall be entitled in the next payment to deduct from the amount of the judicial rent such sum or sums as he may have paid over and above the amount of the judicial rent, in respect of the period between the date of the notice of application to fix the judicial rent and the date when such rent was fixed."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universites): It seems to me that this amending clause will very satisfactorily meet the difficulty we discussed a short time ago, and I believe it is only what every hon. Member considers to be a matter of fairness and justice to the crofter. I hope, therefore, that the Committee will agree to it.

Question put, and *agreed to;* words *added* accordingly.

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwork, Bermondsey), in rising to move the Amendment of which he had given Notice, said: I do not pretend to suggest that the words which I have put down are those which the Committee, or the Government, will actually, in their present form, accept. I have consulted my Scotch legal friends, and got from them the best information I could as to the meaning of words in Scotch law; and also my Scotch farming friends, in order to learn the best way in which to arrive at my object. But my purpose is to substitute for a fixed rent payable for 15 or seven years a variable rent based on the value of produce. This has been the practice in tithe averages for the last 50 years, and with the best results. It has done away with incessant heart-burnings, and brought about content instead of discontent. I mentioned the other night that I remembered in my youth that clergymen who had, at the time, a rent from the land in kind, which is as real as that of landowners, were shot at their own doors, or dragged out of their houses by infuriate farmers and threatened with death unless they agreed to give up tithes in kind. The Tithe Rent-Charge Act was passed and the discontent ceased; and here I may observe that the tithe owner is as much a landlord as the landowner. Land has, in fact, a double owner. Now, I am ready to admit that the tithe averages pressed hardly on the tithe owner, clerical and lay; but in the present case the area from which the average is collected can be enlarged, and the landlord and tenant thus justly dealt with. If the Government had listened to me when I urged this policy in connection with the Irish Land Act of 1881 the troubles of 1886 could not have occurred. Produce, we are told, has fallen 30 per cent, and rents which were just enough in 1881 are unfair at present. Besides, it is worth while to meet the bitter and growing hostility of tenants to landlords by timely concession. A friend of mine has said that till lately it was a misfortune to possess land; at present it is becoming a crime. I understand that my right hon. and learned Friend is prepared to lay before us an automatic scale, upon which these rents shall be dealt with. Of course, under those circumstances, if I have a pledge from him that he will bring in an automatic scale on Report I shall be quite willing to withdraw the Amendment which I am about to move; but, otherwise, I must press it on the acceptance of the Committee.

Amendment proposed, in page 4, at end of Clause, add—

"Every rent, whether it be the present rent, the yearly rent, including money and any prestations other than money, rent altered by agreement or fair rent, shall be interpreted in produce, that is to say, shall be payable in the following proportions, thirty per centum in the market value of oats, twenty per centum in the market value of potatoes, and fifty per centum in the market value of cattle sold, taken by the fiars court prices for the year preceding the date at which the rent is due, and it shall be the duty of the fiars court to strike these prices.

"The quantities shall be, in this calculation, the imperial quarter of oats, the hundredweight of potatoes, and the average price of stock for the year preceding."—(*Mr. Thorold Rogers.*)

The LORD ADVOCATE: I can only repeat the promise made on Thursday last, and again this evening, that I will consider the matter before the Report. I hope the hon. Gentleman will not press his Amendment now.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I rise to move the next Amendment, which stands in my name, and which I trust Her Majesty's Government will consider *pari passu* with the other Amendments they have undertaken to look into before the Report. This is a subject that I have spent many years of my life in dealing with. I am of opinion that there should be some means by which, under extraordinary circumstances, you should have the power to intervene equitably to meet the case of rents which cannot, owing to unforeseen causes, be paid. I shall move the Amendment formally, and as I said I do not wish to press it upon the Committee now.

Amendment proposed,

In page 4, at end, add—"Provided, That, if within the term for which any rents are fixed under the provisions of this section, it shall appear to the Land Commission that, owing to excessive failure of crops and stock, great changes of value, or other causes which could not be foreseen, and which operate either generally or in particular areas, rents previously fair have become unfair and inequitable, and cannot be paid, the Land Commission may, with the consent of the Secretary for Scotland previously obtained, declare that rents may be revised, and abatements or suspensions may be granted, on due cause shown, either generally or in a specified area. And, after the issue of such declaration, any crofter, or any body of crofters, in any particular area, may apply to the Land Commission for revision, abatement, or suspension of rent. Upon such application, after due inquiry, and hearing the parties, the Land Commission may either revise and alter the rents or grant any abatement, for any specified term, or may suspend the whole or any portion of the rent, and direct on what dates, and in what instalments, such supsended rent is to be paid."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Before the Amendment is withdrawn, I wish to make one remark which, I think, the Government ought to take into consideration. We have actually adopted one Amendment which contemplates that, under certain circumstances, rent shall be diminished, and under others that it shall not be diminished. I want to point out that when the Government are considering the question of the reconsideration of rents once fixed by the Land Court, it would, I think, be absolutely essential that if they are to take into view circumstances under which rent should be diminished they should, on the other hand, take into view circumstances in which it should be increased. If the tenant is to get the benefit of the rent being reduced in certain circumstances, it is only fair that under others the landlord should have the benefit of an increased rent. I think the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy has forgotten that point.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I did not forget that point, which I entirely recognize in theory, although we contend that in practice it is not admissible. I only propose that there should be interference when extraordinary circumstances occur. I can only suppose that any extraordinary circumstances should occur to justify the raising of the rent on the tenant, although we know that in unfavourable times the landlord does sometimes give up a portion of the rent. As I said, I am willing to withdraw the Amendment, on the understanding that it should be considered with others before Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): My hon. Friend the Member for East Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear) asks me, in his absence, to move the Amendment standing in his name. I understand that Her Majesty's Government are disposed to accept the Amendment; and I shall, therefore, not detain the Committee by dwelling at length upon the subject. In order to save time, and as Her Majesty's Government have intimated their intention of amending the 1st sub-section, I will at present only move the addition of Sub-section (3), after which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate may add the words proposed to be added when a former Amendment was under discussion.

Amendment proposed,

In page 4, after Sub-section (2), add—"(3.) The lodging of an application to the Land Commission to fix a fair rent shall operate *ipso facto* as a sist of all proceedings for removal of the crofter till the said application is finally determined."—(*Dr. Cameron.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I said I would inquire into this subject, and I have to suggest the withdrawal of the Amendment, and I will then move an Amendment with some verbal alterations to carry out the object.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed,

In page 4, at the end, to add—"When an application is lodged with the Land Commission to fix a fair rent, it shall be in the power of the Land Commission, on the application of the crofter, to sist all proceedings for the removal of the crofter till the said application is finally determined upon such terms as to payment of rent or otherwise as they shall think fit."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): This is a question of great importance, and I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman will agree that the 1st subsection cannot be seriously and adequately considered until we know what will be the effect of the whole clause. From all that we know of matters in the Highlands, the question of arrears is one which does require to be dealt with. It is certainly stretching a point for Parliament to interfere in this matter; but, at the same time, the question is one that has to be faced, and I think it is for the interest of the landlord and tenant that some aid should be given by Parliament for the settlement of this question. The right hon. and learned Gentleman will understand that I approach this subject with no prejudice with regard to it, and I am quite prepared to deal with it otherwise than in a *doctrinaire* way. But what will happen when the Land Commission opens its doors to applications of this kind? When an application is made for the fixing of a fair rent, it will be desirable that the Land Commission should consider both the fair rent, and take a just view of past obligations where there are arrears of rent. Now, the right hon. and learned Gentleman proposes that it should be the duty of the Commission to take a *primâ facie* view of the case, and consider whether there is any ground for the suspension or abatement of arrears; and, although I agree with that in principle, there is this somewhat serious practical difficulty. It is possible that a provision of this kind may be taken advantage of, not only by those who cannot pay owing to bad times, and who, even supposing that they made an honest effort, might not be able to pay; but I think we must all know that there is a great amount of indisposition to pay any rent at all in certain parts of the Highlands. Now, I am sure hon. Gentlemen will agree that it would be highly illegitimate that the Land Commission should be made use of for postponing or rendering difficult the payment of debts which are fair and just, and which the parties owing them are quite able to meet. I trust the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite has considered this question. I ask him if the proceedings of the Land Commission are to be such as will enable them expeditiously to dispose of a *primâ facie* case of arrears; because, if not, there would be a congestion of the work of the Commission, and applications might be lodged merely in order to gain time, and to secure the gratuitous possession of a holding for a period. That I regard as one serious practical difficulty in the way of the operation of the new clause; and I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman will agree with me in saying that nothing I have said is at variance with what he has invited the Committee to consider, or at variance with justice. The right hon. and learned Gentleman proposes that the Land Commission should have power to sist all proceedings for the removal of the crofter until the application is finally determined. In principle I quite agree with that, or, rather, it seems to me that it is expedient and just; but I point out that its expedience and justice depend on the method by which the Land Commission deals with and solves the question. Therefore, I think that an arrangement should be made for the Commission to consider *primâ facie* cases of arrears, and leave for ultimate decision the question of fair rent. I believe the right hon. and learned Gentleman will consider that this is nothing else than the practical way of proceeding. I am anxious that the right hon. and learned Gentleman should explain what are the methods and principles on which the question of arrears is to be ultimately dealt with? What I say is that the Commissioners ought to have regard to what would have been a fair rent during the years in which the arrears have run up. It may be that what would be a fair rent for the future has been too high for the tenant to pay in the past—it might be that it was a rent which in better times ought to have been paid. The right hon. and learned Gentleman seems hardly to consider that it is possible that the rent should ever be too low; but my point is this—that the Commissioners ought to consider what should be the proper sum, having regard to the different circumstances of the times in the past as compared with the present. I am anxious that the Committee should proceed on some definite principle such as that in considering what should be the action of the Commissioners in the future. I trust that he will enable the Commissioners to pronounce upon this question; while, at the same time, leaving them entirely free to determine what rent shall be paid in the future. I grant that it is a difficult duty to settle one part of this question so as not to prejudge other questions which will ultimately have to be considered; but I shall be most happy to assist in finding out a way which will conduce to this result.

The LORD ADVOCATE: I am glad that my hon. and learned Friend opposite (Mr. Robertson) agrees with the view that it is desirable to deal with the question of arrears by this Bill; because it would be extremely unfortunate if any outlying question should prevent poor tenants, for whose benefit we are legislating, from getting a fair start. It seems to me that possibly, by the variation of the language before Report, it may be found desirable to introduce the second Amendment of the hon. Member for East Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear), which deals with this subject. I should hardly be disposed to accept it as it stands at present; but, if agreed to now, I shall be glad to see if some variation of language cannot be introduced into the Amendment on Report. I have objected to the proposal to substitute notice of action, because it would automatically stop all remedy for the recovery of arrears, and there would be a strong temptation to the tenants who want time to make use of this Act for the purpose of getting time in cases where it was never intended to proceed further. But, according to the Amendment which I have proposed, there would not be that automatic result. What I propose is, that it shall be in the power of the crofter to make an application. I hope that few, if any, removals will be pressed on while proceedings are pending under this Act; but the object of the Amendment is this. If the crofter thinks he can produce *primâ facie* reasons for the Court to hold its hand, then he ought to be empowered to do so. He goes to the Court and says—"I ask for a fair rent to be fixed, and I ask you to stop any removal until that question is settled." He may come and say—"My rent is too high, and I am being removed for the non-payment of it;" and then the Land Commissioners would be able to say—"What rent do you think would be a fair rent?" It would be, no doubt, necessary for the Commissioners to take a *primâ facie* view of the matter; but such *primâ facie* view would not be taken into consideration in the ultimate determination of the fair rent to be paid. I may say that what I had in mind when I proposed this Amendment was that the Commissioners might adopt some such system as ordering the payment of a certain amount into Court. I apprehend that in estimating the remainder which was due the system which my hon. and learned Friend the ex-Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Robertson) would be a fair one to act upon.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I only want the right hon. and learned Gentleman to clear up one thing. By the Amendment of the right hon. and learned Gentleman two applications would have to be made by the crofter. Now, the question which arises is the question of expense. I presume that applications of this kind could not be made for nothing; and therefore I wish to ask, would it not be possible to allow one application to combine the two matters?

THE LORD ADVOCATE: It appears to me that that would be quite possible. I will undertake to consider the suggestion.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness): I am glad the Government has consented to deal with this question of arrears, because there is no question which more interests the population of the Highlands than this one. When the Royal Commission to the Highlands was going round, they found that in some cases there were arrears due of from eight and 10 to 14 years' rent. I will go this length, and say that unless the Government are prepared to come forward with some moderate sum—say £20,000—to help to wipe off these arrears, I very much doubt whether the benefits which are given to the crofter by this Act will take effect. The course I suggest was adopted in regard to Ireland, and I think that we in the Highlands are entitled to receive some such small sum as I have mentioned.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I think it would be impossible to regard this Bill as satisfactory, unless it contained some scheme for dealing with arrears; but, at the same time, I do think that the question of dealing with arrears involves some anomalies which ought to be accepted by the Committee with very great reluctance. What we are doing by this Amendment is this—we are wiping off a legal debt, and the question is how far are we going to carry that principle? If the tenant has not been able to pay his grocer, for instance, are you going to wipe off that class of debt also? By this Bill it is proposed not only to fix rents for the future, but to go much further, and to say that the debts which the crofter has incurred in the past shall not be paid. Well, Sir, I confess that nothing will induce me to be a party to a transaction of that kind; but it appears to me that if we do not, in some way, deal with the question of arrears, great wrong may be done to the tenant. I have to choose, therefore, between the possibility of a great wrong on the one side, and a great breach of principle on the other; and after great hesitation I have come to the conclusion that I must accept the breach of principle, although I am bound to say I do so with great regret. Now, Sir, there is another thing which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has dealt with. I think he seemed to have in his mind that the terms of this Amendment contemplates that evictions can only take place for the non-payment of rent, and he appeared to forget the other statutory conditions.

The LORD ADVOCATE: It will apply only to the period before which the fair rent has been fixed, and, therefore, any other reference is unnecessary.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: But why should the Committee have a power, before the fair rent is fixed, far in excess of any power hitherto given?

The LORD ADVOCATE: There will be no statutory conditions until the Bill comes into operation.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I mean the conditions that will become statutory. Why should a landlord not have power to turn out a tenant for persistently injuring his holding by the dilapidation of buildings, or after the landlord has given him notice, for going on deteriorating it, or for sub-dividing or sub-letting? Why should the landlord not have the power to evict a tenant for the breach of the second, third, fourth, or fifth statutory conditions of the Bill, when all we want to do is to protect the tenant from eviction for the non-payment of rent, and to provide that an evil-disposed landlord should not prevent a tenant from getting the benefits of the Bill? But, Sir, I am afraid that this Amendment, or any other Amendment which has a fragment of justice in it, will not satisfy those who are at present in arrears of rent. In the majority of cases I am afraid that those arrears are not the result of poverty, but of political agitation. [*Laughter.*] If any hon. Member has the slightest doubt of the truth of that assertion, he has only to look at the manner in which the arrears of rent have increased in the Highlands during the last four or five years. I venture to say that in the Island of Skye, in 1880 to 1844, they might have been counted by hundreds, but they are now to be computed by thousands of pounds. These arrears are not the result of poverty or destitution, or anything else the Committee can sympathize with; but they are the result of the unfortunate demoralization which political agitation and the extravagant hopes which have been only too easily excited in the minds of a too excitable population. I will give the House an illustration of this in a case which came under my notice lately. In the Island of Skye a dispute arose, not between a landlord and a crofter, but between two crofting communities. The landlord offered arbitration; he used every method in his power to get the dispute settled; but the parties refused every method of conciliation, and finally they compromised by refusing in common to pay any rent to the landlord until the dispute between the two communities could be finally adjusted. ["Hear, hear!"] Well, Sir, that is a proceeding which appears to me to meet with the approval of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway; but whatever views they may have on the point, I trust that the House of Commons has not yet arrived at that point to consider that it is criminal to pay rent at all, however just that rent may be. I only mention this story as an illustration of the condition into which the crofters have unfortunately got. It is perfectly clear that it is not the legitimacy of their rent that they object to, and it is perfectly clear that the refusal to pay is a political one, and is not the outcome of poverty; and in the case which I have mentioned I do not see how, by any possibility, we can stay proceedings against those crofters. Therefore, while I am prepared to accept the substance of the Amendment, I must put on record both my reluctance to adopt so violent a breach of every principle which has hitherto guided such legislation, and my conviction that the Amendment of the right hon. and learned Gentleman will not aid the case of the great majority of the arrears, which now, most unhappily, exist in the West Highlands of Scotland.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I think the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down must be very imperfectly acquainted with the character of the people of the West Highlands, and also of the conditions with which they have been surrounded during the last few years. He has based an argument upon a story; but he ought to have given the Committee such names as would have enabled hon. Members who represent these people to verify the statements. So far as I know the character of the people, I am satisfied that so long as they have the ability they have the will to pay all their just and lawful debts. But I think the fact is this—and I think that hon. Members ought to recognize it—that up to the last six or seven years the tenants were paying the maximum rents which they had paid in good times. Now, the Committee must recollect that the last four or five years have been exceedingly bad years, and the simple fact is this—that in consequence of these bad times tenants even of good farms have been unable to make their rents out of the land, and arrears have accordingly accumulated. The proposal of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) looks very well on paper; but if my view of the position is correct, that the tenants have not the money to pay the landlords, I cannot see where the money which is to pay the composition is going to come from. It seems to me to be an insolvable problem, and although it indicates a great stretch on the part of the Government to make the Land Commission the machinery for compounding with tenant's creditors I do not see how it is going to work. On the other hand, I cannot support the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh) to give a grant of public money to pay the landlords, for I already recognize that this Bill is an attempt to bolster up landlordism in Scotland.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): It may facilitate matters if I point out where the real grievance of the arrears question lies. In the cases mentioned by the hon. Member for Inverness (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh), in which there were arrears extending over 10 and 14 years, I would remind the Committee that these arrears have not been accumulated by the present crofters, but have arisen because when a man takes a croft it is the custom of the landlords to compel him to take over the arrears. The Commissioners appreciated this evil, and they recommended that an end should be put to all arrears, except those within a period of two years. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has often appealed to the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners, and I can assure him that he will do well to inquire into their recommendations as far as this point is concerned. I do not think that the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for East Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear) goes as far as it ought to go, and for my part I think it ought to be a direction to the Commissioners to deal more peremptorily with such arrears. But I know that to propose any such thing would simply be to waste the time of the Committee, because the Government would not accept it. As we are all practically agreed, therefore, as to the principle of this Amendment, I think it might be accepted; and if we are to make any progress at all with the Bill to-night, I think it should now be accepted at once without any further discussion.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I will not detain the Committee long; but I wish to refer to one remark of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. A. J. Balfour). He has stated that the arrears of rent in the Highlands are not due to poverty, but that they are more due to a disinclination of the tenants to pay. I have some knowledge of these matters, and although I will not say that no case of the kind has occurred, this I will assert—that there have been a very small number of cases indeed where the tenants who are able to pay their rents have withheld them. The non-payment is due to a process of exhaustion. The right hon. Gentleman opposite says that arrears are not due to the fact that the rents are unfair, but that the accumulation of arrears is due more to politics than inability to pay. I will remind the right hon. Gentleman that in the Isle of Skye, which I visited two years ago with an Irish Member who sits on the other side of the House, I found land which was assessed at 25*s.* an acre, or a higher rent than could be got in the county of Surrey, or in the county of Kent. I asked my Irish Friend what the Irish Land Commission would assess the land at, and he answered me "7*s.* 6*d.* or 10*s.* at the very outside." I should prefer, as the hon. Member for one of the divisions of Glasgow has stated, that this Amendment should give the Commission power to wipe off all arrears beyond a certain period back. Two years, I think, would be a fair period. It has been one of the conditions of obtaining a crop that the tenant should take over any burdens attaching to the previous crop. There is no necessity for limiting the period of arrears, because the arrears are carried forward continuously. I do not wish to prevent this Bill from passing through the House. Let it go for what it is worth. I am afraid it will not be worth much; but, at any rate, it shall not be obstructed in the House by me.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I wish to interpose with one word. We hear that the crofters have taken over crofts, and taken with them, very often, the outstanding arrears. I presume they did not accept the burden of arrears for nothing, and I presume that in taking the arrears they take also the improvements of the outgoing tenant. Already, in dealing with this Bill, the Government has put its foot down, and has refused to recognize the right of the crofter to a penny in respect of the improvements for which the incoming pays the outgoing tenant. I fail to see why you should adopt a principle in the case of a crofter and refuse to adopt it in the case of the landlord.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member for Argyll challenges my statement and wishes to prove to me, by ocular demonstration in the Isle of Skye, that his view of the matter is correct. I would ask the hon. Member one question, and it shall be in regard to the Island to which he refers. I find that a large number of tenants there have refused to pay their rents to the landlords. Have they, I would ask, offered to pay any portion of them? If it be true that they are suffering from such excessive rents and that they are burning with the desire to pay their just debts that the hon. Gentleman opposite thinks they are, I ask him whether, under these circumstances, they have taken the obvious course of offering to the landlord that portion of the rent which they consider they ought to pay? I think that the hon. Gentleman will find that they have done nothing of the kind; and when the hon. Member declaims so strongly against landlords allowing arrears to take place, it certainly does seem to me remarkable that such a position should be taken up by the hon. Member, seeing that he, more than anyone else perhaps, was instrumental in making it impossible for any landlord in the West of Scotland to enforce his legal rights at all. I think, at all events, the hon. Member might have spared the landlords that piece of irony. I would ask the hon. Member whether he and the Society with which he is connected have encouraged the tenants to pay what they can, or have done their best to make it easy for the landlords to carry out, by force of law, the legal obligations which the tenants have entered into? However, I do not wish to pursue this question any further.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Will the right hon. Gentleman mention one single case in which I advised tenants, publicly or privately, not to pay their rents?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I said the hon. Member's influence had certainly not been exercised in the direction of the tenants paying their rents.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I am not a collector of rents.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: My regret, and my chief regret, in connection with the Amendment dealing with arrears is that it will encourage this demoralization to spread further in the Highlands; but, as I have expressed my opinion on that point already, I will not trouble the Committee by going into it at any greater length. I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will give an opinion upon the technical point raised just now.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): There would be a question as to the Act having come into operation before anything is settled, and I therefore think we should insert the words "in respect of non-payment of rent," after the word "crofter" in the second instance.

Dr. CAMERON: As the Amendment is not on the Paper, these alterations make it very difficult for us to understand it. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman read it?

The LORD ADVOCATE: It stands thus—

"When an application is lodged with the Land Commission to fix a fair rent, it shall be in the power of the Land Commission, either under the same or under another application by the crofter, to sist all proceedings for removal of the crofter in respect of non-payment of rent till the said application is finally determined upon such terms as to payment of rent or otherwise as they shall think fit."

Question, "That the Amendment be amended by the insertion of the words proposed," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I beg to move the addition of the following words:—

"In the proceedings on such application the Land Commission shall take an account of the amount of arrears of rent due, or to become due, before the application is finally determined, and may take evidence of all the circumstances which have led to such arrears, and shall decide whether, in view of such circumstances, the whole or what part of such arrears ought in equity to be paid, and whether in whole or by instalments, and at what dates the same should be paid, and the amount and dates so fixed shall be deemed to be the total amount of such arrears due by the crofter, and the terms at which the same become payable."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That those words be there added."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): Are these words not to have some amendment?

The LORD ADVOCATE: I will move them here; and if any alteration is required it can be made on Report.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: No doubt the clause is good as it stands, but it is very vague; and I think it will be well to direct the attention of the Land Commission more precisely to what is the fair rent in each year the arrears have run, having regard to the value of the produce and so on each year. Further, it seems to me that the words "in equity," in the 6th line of the Amendment, are not appropriate to a clause of this kind. My experience as a lawyer is that anyone who wants to justify a wrong conclusion always says—"It is done in equity."

The LORD ADVOCATE: These words in the first part of the Amendment have not been put forward as the only construction of that which the Commissioners are to bear in mind, but as one out of many; so that, in taking exception to them, the hon. Member would simply be picking out one construction from a number. As to his second point, I think there is some force in it, and I shall be prepared to leave out the words "in equity."

Question, "That the words 'in equity' stand part of the Amendment," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That those words, as amended, be there added," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 7 (Renunciation of tenancy).

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): This clause says that a crofter shall be entitled, upon one year's notice in writing to the landlord, to renounce his tenancy as at any term of Whitsunday or Martinmas. To this I had proposed to add a sub-section dealing with renunciation of tenancy in the following terms:—

"(2.) Where a tenant falls within the definition of a crofter in this Act, except that his tenancy is under a lease instead of from year to year, and such tenant, within thirty years prior to the passing of this Act, or his predecessors in the same family, have been crofters occupying the same holding which such tenant occupies at the passing of this Act, or part thereof, such tenant shall be entitled, upon one year's notice in writing to the landlord, to renounce his tenancy as at any term of Whitsunday or Martinmas, and shall thereafter be deemed to be a crofter within the meaning of this Act."

The principle of the Amendment has been discussed in connection with the proposal of the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherland (the Marquess of Stafford); and it appears to me that unless Members of the Committee show a certain amount of forbearance in pressing on their individual views, we shall have little prospect of being able to pass the Bill through in anything like reasonable time. The Government, I think, have dealt most liberally with us in the amount of time they have placed at our command, which has been a much more liberal allowance than Scotland has received in previous Sessions. It is natural that hon. Members should desire to speak in support of their own Amendments, and each express his views in an eloquent speech—sometimes in a series of eloquent speeches. I would appeal to them, however, to put a little restraint upon themselves in that respect, and to do something to expedite the passing of the Bill through the House. I will not move my Amendment, but will withdraw it in order to save the time of the Committee.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 8 (Compensation to crofter for improvements on removal).

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to move that the subsection which renders it necessary, in order to entitle the crofter to compensation for permanent improvements, that these improvements shall have been executed or paid for by the crofter or his predecessors in the same family within 30 years, be amended by leaving out the words "within thirty years."

Amendment proposed, in page 4, lines 17 and 18, to leave out "within thirty years."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): I think it would be an improvement if this Amendment were adopted. The improvements in value to the incoming tenant will be paid for to the crofter who leaves his holding, and who claims to be compensated for them.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): It occurs to me that it will be difficult to get records of a reliable nature of the improvements which have been effected by a crofter's predecessors. You must, after all, think of the possibility of proving or disproving cases. If you go back any length of time, how will it be possible to distinguish what has been done by the landlord and what has been done by the tenant; and how will the other circumstances of the case influence the decision of the Court? I think the hon. and learned Solicitor General for Scotland must give us some stronger and better reason for permitting the withdrawal of an important part of the clause, more than the vague assertion that he thinks the alteration an improvement. Why is it that he withdrew from the former position he took up? Why does he think there should be no limit of time in these cases? It is clear that there ought to be some limit or other. If you go back beyond a certain period, all knowledge as to who made the improvements and to whose efforts they were due will be lost in the dim and distant past. I certainly think we should have some more precise statement about this matter.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND: The improvements will be paid for to the crofter who leaves his holding, and who claims to be compensated for them. To entitle him to compensation, he must prove that the improvements have been executed or paid for by himself or his predecessors in the same family. When that is established, the next thing to prove is that they are of some value to the incoming crofter—that the measure of the compensation for the improvements will be the value which those improvements are to the incoming crofter. It does not seem expedient to complicate that inquiry still further by obliging the Commissioners to ascertain what is the precise period within which the improvements were executed. If the improvements were executed by the crofter himself, or by his predecessors in his own family, and if they are of value to the incoming crofter, it is difficult to see on what principle the crofter has forfeited his right to compensation for them simply because they have been executed more than a given number of years ago. The important question is whether or not they have been executed or paid for by the crofter or his predecessors in title, and whether or not they are still of value to the incoming crofter.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): The onus of proof will lie on the crofter. I would remind the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour) that one principle that was universally accepted in connection with the Irish Bill was that it should be assumed that the improvements belonged to the tenant until it was proved to the contrary. This Bill does not go so far as that, and I rest on the improved contention of the Solicitor General for Scotland.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I rise to move in page 4, line 19, to leave out Sub-section (c). The sub-section sets forth that the crofter, if removed from his holding, shall be entitled to compensation for any permanent improvements, provided that—

> "The improvements have not been executed in virtue of any agreement or understanding expressed in estate regulations, or other writings."

If a limitation of this kind were adopted, and no compensation is to be given for improvements effected in virtue of understandings expressed in estate regulations, no compensation will be given at all. This is one of those methods by which a boon is given with one hand, and immediately taken back with the other. The understanding upon which all estate regulations are framed is that everything which is put in the land by the crofter becomes at once the property of the landlord. I understand that that is Scotch law, so that practically this clause, if Sub-section (c) is allowed to remain in it, will become one of the confiscating clauses. Clauses of this kind are drawn up by lawyers for the purpose of disabling the crofters; and, unless they are amended, in becoming Acts of Parliament they will destroy all the improvements that have ever taken place on the crofts from time immemorial. If you do not wish this Bill to be a farce, and if you desire to give compensation for any improvements at all, you will require to leave out the sub-section and give compensation, notwithstanding the fact that all the estate regulations require that these improvements shall be made by the crofter, and become the property of the landlord as soon as they are made.

Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 19, leave out Sub-section (c).—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): I certainly am not prepared to maintain that the words of this sub-section are quite so satisfactory as they might be; but, on the other hand, it is quite impossible to adopt the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Dr. Clark)—namely, that the sub-section should be omitted altogether. The effect of leaving out the sub-section altogether would be this—that the tenant might be entitled to be compensated for improvements which he is bound by his contract with the landlord to execute. We know very well that if a landlord, when letting a farm to a crofter, makes the tenant bound to execute certain improvements that necessarily enter into the calculation when the amount of rent, which the tenant of the croft has to pay is settled. In such a case the payment by the crofter or tenant consists in part of a money payment, and in part of the execution of certain improvements on the croft which belong to the landlord. I am sure the Committee will see it would be quite contrary to fairness to oblige the landlord to compensate a crofter for improvements which the crofter was bound to execute on condition of taking the croft, presumably at a reduced rent. I would suggest that the present Amendment should not be pressed, but that when we come to the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) the words he suggests should be inserted. The result would be that the sub-section would read—

> "The improvements have not been executed in virtue of any specific agreement under which the tenant was bound to execute such improvements."

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness): I can say, of my own knowledge, and in consequence of what I have heard, that, for the last 80 years, the ingenuity of lawyers and factors has been exercised to explain away or do away with all improvements made by the tenants. I shall, therefore, vote for the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Dr. Clark).

Sir HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton): The remarks which have just fallen from my hon. Friend (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh) come with peculiar force from him, because of the position which, until quite recently, he occupied. I only wish, however, to express my entire agreement with the observations of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Asher). I hope the Amendment will be withdrawn in favour of that of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay).

Mr. BEITH (Glasgow, Central): I think the proposal of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) might be accepted by the Committee. It is well known that usually everything in the Highlands is done to secure for the landlord the benefit of improvements made upon croft.

Mr. M'LAREN (Stafford): I hope the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) will withdraw his Amendment, because it is quite impossible to carry it against the Government. Besides, if the Committee desires to strike out Sub-section (c), we may not be able to get the Amendment of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay).

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I think the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Clark) had better not press his Amendment. I think, however, the words of the Irish Land Act would be better than the alternative Amendment of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay). The Irish Act provides that a tenant shall not be entitled to any compensation in respect of improvements executed under a contract "for valuable consideration;" therefore the words "valuable consideration" would be very applicable in this case.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): Although I have an Amendment on the Paper similar to that now under discussion, I would advise my hon. Friend (Dr. Clark) to withdraw his proposition in favour of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay).

Mr. PRESTON BRUCE (Fifeshire, W.): The only question I wish to raise is, whether the words proposed by the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) are not covered already by Clause 10?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND: In reply to my hon. Friend (Mr. Preston Bruce) I may point out that Clause 10 relates to a subject entirely different to that dealt with by Sub-section (c) of Clause 8; Clause 10 relates to the amount of compensation, the contribution by the landlord being taken into account; but this sub-section deals with the identity of the improvement. For example, a crofter might become bound to erect a fence, or to execute the drainage of a field. It seems reasonable that if it is part of the contract that he should drain a particular field he should pay so much less for that field. Sub-section (c) applies to a case of that kind, whereas Clause 10 applies to a case where there has been any contribution by the landlord.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The real question at issue is, whether we shall or shall not assent to the breaking of improvement contracts. If a tenant has had his rent fixed in virtue of an agreement by which he shall perform certain things, interference ought not to be permitted. I cannot conceive that the Committee will seriously entertain this proposition. I feel that everything which has been urged by the Mover of the Amendment (Dr. Clark) will be met by the words of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), or words of the same purport.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I trust the Amendment will be withdrawn. It appears to me that, as the Committee have already disposed of the question of leases, there is really no bearing in this Amendment.

Dr. CLARK: I regret I cannot withdraw the Amendment. I do not admit the principle laid down by the occupants of the Front Benches, that the holder of a monopoly can lay down unjust conditions and confiscate the accumulated labour of individuals, and then come to Parliament and ask for its sanction. I must press my Amendment, though I do not propose to go to a division.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment *negatived.*

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I now move the Amendment of which I have given Notice—namely, to leave out from "agreement" to the end of the clause, and insert "specific agreement under which the tenant is bound to execute such improvements." I do not know that it is of very much consequence what words are put in; but I think these words meet the equity of the case. I certainly prefer them to the words proposed by the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark). Of course, it would be open to the landlord to show or attempt to prove that he had made a considerable reduction of rent, in consideration of certain improvements being made. My Amendment is certainly more specific and definite than that just negatived.

Amendment proposed,

In page 4, line 20, leave out from "agreement" to end of Clause, and insert "specific agreement under which the tenant was bound to execute such improvements."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): As the sub-section will now read, I think it needs improvement—

> "The improvements have not been executed in virtue of any specific agreement under which the tenant was bound to execute such improvements."

It is not stated that the tenant has received, or is to receive, any consideration for making these improvements. I propose to add after "improvements" the words "in consideration of a lower rent or otherwise." As it stands at present, no matter by what means the tenant has been compelled to enter into this specific agreement, he will be debarred from compensation. What I want to secure is that if the tenant enters into a specific agreement, he shall do so for some consideration. I beg to move to add "in consideration of a lower rent or otherwise."

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin): The hon. Member simply proposes to add those words. He will be able to do so when the Amendment is accepted.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead): I do not quite like the words "specific agreement." They are of doubtful construction, and it may be that one agreement may be specified and another substituted for it. I propose that instead of the words "specific agreement" there should be inserted the words "under any contract."

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, by leaving out the words "specific agreement" in order to insert the words "under any contract." —(*Mr. Gregory.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'specific agreement' stand part of the said proposed Amendment."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): With reference to the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gregory), I think the words "specific agreement" are much more appropriate to the clause than "under any contract." The object of the clause is to define the class of improvements in respect of which the crofter is not to be entitled to compensation. It is proposed to disallow improvements which the crofter has executed under obligation to his landlord, and nothing can be better than to describe these improvements as executed under a specific agreement. I understand those words to mean an agreement which relate to the improvements in question. I think the words "specific agreement" are much less likely to create confusion than the words "under any contract." The latter words might involve an examination of documents, while "specific agreement" would get rid of all ambiguity.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I am bound to say I prefer the language of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) to that suggested by my hon. Friend (Mr. Gregory), and I will explain why. I like the definite and somewhat peremptory language of the hon. Member for Forfarshire. As I understand the matter, this clause would exclude any general agreement that some sort of improvement should be executed. On former occasions I have urged the Committee to adopt stringent and clear language; and I fancy hon. Members below the Gangway opposite have therefore suspected that I have had a wish to favour the interests of the landlords. I have had no such wish; but I have always thought it is much better that there should be no misconception on a subject of this kind. I can fancy a landlord might produce an estate regulation, containing some very general and sweeping clause, which might be made applicable to all improvements. I understand the present proposal, and I approve of it. What is intended is, that these improvements must be done in pursuance of an agreement directly relating to them. For these reasons, I have the greatest pleasure in supporting the hon. Member for Forfarshire, and the more willingly because I am afraid it is not very often I shall have the pleasure of doing so.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Question again proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I think that in Sub-section (c), as originally drafted, it was intended that all agreements or understandings should be written documents. I agree with the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bute (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) that the matter should be very definite; and therefore I beg to move the addition of the words "in writing" after "specific agreement."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment after the word "agreement" to insert the words "in writing."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'in writing' be there inserted."

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I am entirely opposed to this Amendment, and I hope the Government will support me in my opposition. It happens in many instances, especially in the case of holdings held from year to year, that arrangements are made, not in writing, but at the same time with absolute definiteness, and upon those each party has a right to rely. An attempt was made at an earlier stage of the progress of this Committee to require the insertion of the words, "should be proved to have been entered into." That was very properly opposed by the Representatives of the Government upon the ground that it would be the duty of the Land Commission to accept nothing but satisfactory and conclusive proof. I appeal to the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, or to the hon. and learned Solicitor General for Scotland, as to whether it would be necessary in a Court of Law that there should be writing upon this subject? I assert—and I am sure the right hon. and hon. and learned Gentlemen will bear me out—most undoubtedly it would not. This is a completely reactionary proposal; it is contrary to all the methods by which the admissibility of evidence has been extended, and I am entirely opposed to it. I oppose it on the ground that the interest of neither party would be served, but that the interest of both parties in important cases might be frustrated.

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I am sorry that the interest the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. J. P. Robertson) has shown in the tenants should have been so short-lived. He is now anxious that these understandings should not be so precise and stringent as he, a short time ago, asked that they should be. I will tell you why I object to any understanding or any estate regulation. In the first place, an understanding can be proved by gamekeepers to be almost anything you like. I have had large experience as an arbiter and witness in Courts of Justice, and I know you can prove anything you care to prove by gamekeepers, rat-catchers, and the like. Moreover, we know well enough what understandings and estate regulations amount to; they simply amount to this—that all improvements by the tenant are to go to the landlord. The agreement ought to be in writing.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: I think it would be very dangerous to leave matters of this kind to verbal evidence. A very common practice would be for the land agent or factor, in the presence of the clerk, to tell the tenant that such and such things had been arranged. They can easily prove it, and what defence would a tenant have? Very probably he did not understand what was said to him, and he might make some general promise which would be construed into a specific agreement.

Sir HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton): I hope my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) will not press his opposition to this Amendment. It takes a very slight experience in the management of land to know that nothing is so confusing, and nothing is open to so much dispute, as a verbal understanding. Not having had the advantage of a legal education or experience, I cannot understand the objection which my hon. and learned Friend has taken to the very simple and, as it seems to me, very reasonable proposal of the hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance).

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND: Notwithstanding what has been said by my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson), I adhere to the opinion that it is desirable that the words "in writing" should be here inserted. I cannot imagine anything more unfortunate than that there should be a dispute, probably sharply contested, between landlord and crofter as to whether a particular improvement had or had not been executed under an agreement made between them. Certainly, it would be natural that if a crofter executed some improvement which was to have the effect of diminishing his rent, there should be some document embodying that obligation on the part of the crofter. I quite agree with the hon. Gentleman (Sir Herbert Maxwell) that it is essential that such an arrangement should be in writing. The balance of advantage is clearly in favour of the Amendment.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I am very sure that if it was the general view of hon. Gentlemen who are disposed to accept this Amendment that it is the practice to have such arrangements put in writing the Amendment would not meet with the opposition it does. The hon. Gentleman the Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch) has spoken of its being possible to prove anything by the evidence of particular witnesses on one side. If the Legislature is going to frame clauses in Acts of Parliament upon the footing that the evidence of a particular class of witnesses is invariably perjured there is an end to the question; but I presume the Legislature is satisfied that the provisions it makes for obtaining truthful statements from witnesses, and for such tribunals as shall judge of the truthfulness of witnesses, will prevent the Legislature from ever proceeding on the footing that certain classes are not to be believed on oath. The experience of my hon. Friend is, perhaps, not so extensive as the experience of other hon. Gentlemen with regard to the reliability of testimony. My experience is, the man who is pleading for a particular side in a case always has the greatest possible reliance upon the witnesses of his own side, and always has the greatest possible distrust of the witnesses on the other side; and it is just the duty of the Land Commission, or any other Court, to draw an even balance, and to form a sound judgment with regard to these extravagant pleadings which ought not to be used before Courts of Justice, and ought not to be used in the House of Commons. I have yet to learn that gamekeepers and ratcatchers are more given to deliberate perjury than other people; but this I say without the slightest fear of contradiction—that if you pass a law by which no arrangement in regard to small improvements on a croft can be made without a bargain in writing such as will stand the investigation of a Court of Law, you will do the greatest conceivable harm to the crofters themselves. I take it that the crofters, being an intelligent class of men, are quite capable of giving evidence on this matter; and I presume it is not the view of my hon. Friend, or of any other hon. Gentleman, that the Land Commission will be more inclined to listened to the evidence of one class of witnesses than another. It is difficult to understand, and I have heard nothing from hon. Gentlemen opposite to lead me to understand, why crofters should be placed in a different position in regard to this matter from other tenants of property in Scotland. Arrangements with regard to similar matters between landlords and tenants all over Scotland are often made verbally. If anyone on this side of the House had proposed that such arrangements should always be in writing, what would have been the answer made to us? It would have been said—"Oh, it is very easy to cloud up the thing in a string of legal phrases in a written document, and put that before the crofter, who is not educated, and ask him to sign it." You can always make excuses of that kind; but I submit to the Committee that they will make a great mistake if, in dealing with illiterate men like the crofters, they put in such a stipulation as that now proposed. The result will be that everybody in the Highlands will be at arm's length in regard to these matters, and that in drawing up the documents it will be necessary to be exact, perchance the documents have afterwards to be interpreted by a Court of Law, and that will lead to a great deal more expense than if you leave the words as they stand.

MR. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I do not agree with the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite when he says that it is common all over Scotland for these agreements not to be in writing.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon; I did not say anything of the kind.

MR. MACFARLANE: I am glad to see that the two Front Benches have fallen out, because I think, under the circumstances, there is a chance that the crofters may get their own. I am strongly in favour of this regulation, and I am now satisfied that the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) is aware that, as a rule, there is no writing for specific agreements of this kind in the Highlands. The right hon. and learned Gentleman says this is a satisfactory provision; but I say it is to enable the landlords to confiscate the whole of the improvements for which this clause has provided some compensation.

MR. CHANCE: I am sorry this Amendment has been called a reactionary one. The right hon. and learned Gentleman must know that under the English Statute of Frauds every contract for more than a year must be in writing. In England and Ireland these agreements are always in writing; and this is only an attempt to assimilate the English and Irish law to that of Scotland.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): I think the words "in writing" would remove a great deal of heartburning between the landlord and tenant; it would put things, doubtless, on a better footing. But if the words were inserted they would inflict some injustice to the landlord; and I suggest the addition of some words to provide that the Amendment should only apply to improvements done after the passing of the Act.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance) has spoken of assimilating the law of England and Ireland with that of Scotland; but he forgets that the Acts he refers to were retrospective. I am sorry to put the Committee to the trouble of dividing on on this question; but it is one of real importance, because what we should do, if we assent to the words in the form which the Government propose, is deliberately to say that we should break contracts entered into in a manner which the Court of Law in Scotland have always sanctioned. We do not think it right; and, therefore, we cannot assent that valid contracts should be broken in the manner proposed in this Amendment.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND: I wish it to be understood that, in the assent which I gave to the proposition of my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. J. P. B. Roberstson), I did not admit anything further than that it would be competent to prove a tenancy for two terms, and that a rent was to be paid for such two terms without writing. I certainly did not contemplate an arrangement of this character—that a tenant who has a verbal contract for a year should be bound, for instance, by a verbal contract to build a house, unless there was writing to prove it.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The law of Scotland is, that a tenancy for a year can be proved without writing, and that means that it can be proved in respect of every condition. If it were a condition of the contract that certain work should be done, I challenge the hon. and learned Gentleman to assert that it must be proved in writing.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton): I wish to know whether the retrospective action of the clause will not affect leases which are necessarily written documents? ["No, no!"] So far as I could understand what was said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour), his remarks as to the breach of contracts could only refer to the breach of written contracts. ["No, no!"]

Question put, "That the words 'in writing' be inserted in the proposed Amendment."

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 183; Noes 69: Majority 114.—(Div. List, No. 62.)

Proposed Amendment *agreed to.*

Words *inserted.*

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): The Amendment which stands next is in my name, and by it I should have proposed to ask the Committee to add to this clause a sub-section taken from the Irish Act of 1870; but, on consideration, I think it better not to move it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 9 (Compensation to cottar for improvements on removal).

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I put down the Amendment, the next on the Paper, to insert "fisherman" after "cottar;" but, in consequence of a larger Amendment to the clause which I have now on the Paper, it is no longer necesary for me to move it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

DR. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I do not know that it will be of any use my saying anything more about the unfortunate "cottar," who has received but scant justice from the House as far as we have gone. But I propose an Amendment which will make the clause run—

> "When a cottar removes, or is removed from his dwelling . . . . . he shall be entitled to compensation,"

and so on. I would set the cottar in this case on just the same footing as the crofter. We have provision made for the crofter when he removes, and I contend that we should do the same for the cottar. I think the cottar should be paid for any improvements done by him on the dwelling or on the land.

Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 22, after "cottar," insert "removes or." —(*Dr. R. McDonald.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): The Committee will observe that the hon. Member has not used the same words as are used in the case of the tenant, which are "renounces his tenancy," and the reason is obvious, for the cottar has no tenancy to renounce. If the Amendment were adopted it would come to this—that if anyone who had built a house on sufferance chose to go away without paying rent, he should then set up a claim for improvements. I think the Committee will not agree to that.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): There is an Amendment on Clause 29, in the name of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, which would make the cottar a tenant from year to year, who might have to pay rent not exceeding £6 a-year without arable and pasture land. Under these circumstances, the cottar would be a rent-paying animal; and, therefore, if he removes, he has as much right to compensation as the crofter. I cannot see how the right hon. and learned Gentleman upholds the clause if he intends to give no compensation to the cottar.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Everything depends upon the definition of the term "cottar." The right hon. and learned Gentleman seems to regard him as merely a squatter at one time, and at another as a person in a higher position. If he is a man who pays rent to the landlord, he ought to be compensated for the house which he has built, when he comes to leave it. The cottar is now in a very different position from that which he occupied when we first commenced the consideration of this Bill. He was then looked upon as a squatter; but now he is recognized as a man who pays rent to the landlord, and I think he should be compensated as well as the crofter.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: In the first place, I point out that the two cases are very different. While I hoped the Amendment would be accepted, I did not feel very sanguine about it. If the Committee agrees to accept the Amendment to Clause 29, then this Amendment may be appropriate to it; but it is not appropriate to the Bill at the present time.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I suggest that the Amendment might be amended in this form—"When the cottar is removed, or, if subject to rent, removes from his holding," and so on.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): The case is this. Take the case of a fisherman who has built a house and wishes to leave. Is he not to have compensation, and not to be allowed to sell? I think some Amendment of this kind is necessary in the case of fishermen.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY: I think the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate must give us a definition of the term "cottar" by which he is going to stand. It is exceedingly awkward to discuss the provisions of a Bill when we have no definition of terms. I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman will solve the difficulty by putting in the word "squatter." A squatter is a man who has taken possession of land and built a house upon it, and I do not think that such a person is entitled, if he goes away, to get compensation. But the cottar now seems to be a crofter, with the difference that he must have some land besides a garden—I suppose about a quarter of an acre. He may have a garden; but if he has more, he is entitled to be considered a crofter. These are difficulties which arise from not having definitions of the terms used.

The LORD ADVOCATE: I think the clause might be admitted with one or two alterations. I suggest, after "cottar," "if not paying rent," and, in line 23, to add "or if paying rent renounces his tenancy," I will move those words.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): Now, Sir, I will move, after the word "therewith," to insert these words—"or if paying rent renounces his tenancy, or is removed."

Amendment *agreed to.*

The LORD ADVOCATE: Then, at line 28, I beg to move to leave out the words "within thirty years."

Amendment *agreed to.*

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin): The hon. Member for Central Glasgow (Mr. Beith) is not, I understand, going to move his Amendment to leave out Sub-section C?

Mr. BEITH (Glasgow, Central): No, Sir.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I beg to move to leave out the words "agreement or understanding expressed in estate regulations or other writings," in order to insert these words—"specific agreement in writing under which the tenant is bound to execute such improvements."

The LORD ADVOCATE: I agree to that.

Question, "That the words 'agreement or understanding expressed in estate regulations or other writings,' stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived.*

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: I would propose still further to amend my Amendment, by substituting the word "cottar" for "tenant."

Question, "That the words 'specific agreement in writing under which the tenant is bound to execute such improvements,' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

On the Motion of The Lord Advocate, the following Amendment made:—In page 4, line 18, leave out the words "thirty years."

On Question, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): Who will have the right to remove the cottar? Not the landlord. I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, whether the cottar will not be the tenant of the crofter, and will be able to defy the landlord?

The LORD ADVOCATE: That is rather a hard case. All I will say is this—that sub-letting is not contemplated in the future. The landlord, of course, only knows the tenant; and as far as the landlord is concerned, the cottar will be there without any consent of his, and will have no title from him. I suppose the crofter would be able to remove him if he chooses?

Mr. MACFARLANE: But not the landlord.

The LORD ADVOCATE: Well, I am not sure about that. I rather think he could.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 10 (Principle of valuation).

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to move, in page 4, line 38, after "improvements," to insert "also the valued amount of any dilapidations by the tenant of the holding." It is admitted that the landlord has, at all events, an equity to be heard before the tribunal as to the value of any assistance he has given the tenant with regard to improvements, and it seems to me that it will only be fair, if the Court is to do ample justice, to provide that if the tenant has made improvements on one part of his holding, and has committed dilapidations on another, both ought to be taken into consideration. It is only equitable that this should be done, and if it is not, there will be only partial justice between the parties.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): No doubt this Amendment derives a good deal of confirmation from the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act; but I would point out that the clause does not create a debtor and creditor account in regard to different matters between the landlord and tenant, but is merely intended to indicate the principles of valuation. It would be hardly germane to a clause like this to bring a cross entry into the account; and, therefore, I cannot accept the Amendment. The question might be very well postponed for subsequent consideration, however.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): At what stage of the Bill will the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) introduce this principle, the equity of which he has already stated he is prepared to admit?

The LORD ADVOCATE: If a clause embodying the principle is brought up, I shall be glad to consider it.

Mr. KIMBER: It does not seem to me that any other stage of the Bill will be so appropriate as this. The proposition which I have made seems only fair also, and I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will accept it.

The LORD ADVOCATE: The clause is only intended to take into account improvements which are partly done by the landlord and partly by the tenant.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I have looked at the position in which the Amendment of my hon. Friend would place this clause, and I am bound to say that I cannot acquiesce in the objection which has been taken to it by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate. Is it not a legitimate thing to say, when you are finally settling with the tenant, that what he has done for the good and what he has done for the bad shall both be taken into account? The argument stands in this way—that the right hon. and learned Gentleman admits that the principle is equitable, and that the bad done by the tenant ought to be taken into account. Well, this is the only place in the Bill, in which it can be inserted; and, therefore, I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman should allow us to insert it now. If that is done, the Commissioners, looking at the same set of buildings, will be allowed to say —"We shall allow so much for improvements, and so much for dilapidations; we shall set one against the other and strike the balance." It appears to me that that is the only equitable way of settling the matter.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I should like to know what hon. Members opposite mean by dilapidations? I should not object to the word "dilapidation" being inserted, if it is understood to mean something that is actually done by the tenant. But if they are going to impose upon the tenant the necessity of maintaining always the buildings, fences, and drains in good order, the Amendment is altogether unreasonable. Buildings, fences, and drains will not last for ever, and I shall certainly take exception to the introduction of the word "dilapidations," unless it is properly defined.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): Surely in the Common Law of Scotland, the word "dilapidations" is well known, and is clearly defined. Dilapidations does not mean ordinary fair wear and tear and the effect of time, but the results of carelessness and negligence on the part of the tenant.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): If the dilapidations refer to the landlord's improvements, and are limited to that, I shall have no objection to the Amendment; but the buildings are put up by the crofters, and the improvements carried out by them, and I shall strongly object to the Amendment being made to apply to the crofter's improvements.

Mr. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, E.): I should like to call attention to Clause 28, which says—

> "Nothing in this Act shall affect the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883, provided that: Where any improvements are valued under the said Act with a view to compensation to be paid to a crofter such valuation shall be made, unless the landlord and crofter otherwise agree, by the Land Commission, according to the procedure prescribed by this Act, but otherwise subject to the provisions of the said Act."

Well, one of the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act deals with the reduction of compensation for dilapidations; and it appears to me, therefore, that that principle is incorporated in this Act by the 28th clause, which I have quoted.

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I am glad that attention has been called to this subject; but I cannot conceive that a tenant will be asked to pay for the dilapidation of his own improvements even by the most ignorant supporter of landlordism.

Mr. KIMBER: I should be glad to accept, as a compromise, a clause in the same words as the clause which is contained in the Irish Act. I think a clause of the same nature would set the matter right.

The LORD ADVOCATE: When I referred to the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883, I had in view the following clause:—

"The amount of compensation payable to the tenant shall be subject to deduction of any sums due to the landlord."

And then there are four heads, one of which is—

"Any deterioration committed or permitted by the tenant."

I would not object to such words as these being brought in to get rid of the difficulty; and I will undertake, if the Committee are willing to carry out the spirit, to insert this clause from the Agricultural Holdings Act at a later stage, either in this place, or in any other place in the Bill which seems appropriate.

MR. CHANCE: I merely wish to point out to the Committee that the Agricultural Holdings Act does not refer to crofters.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. BAIRD (Lanark, N.W.): I am anxious to propose, in page 4, line 39, after "compensation," to insert—

"And Provided always, That such compensation shall not exceed in amount five years' rent of the holding."

Now, these words are strictly in accordance with the views expressed by the Royal Commission which sat some years ago, as hon. Gentlemen will see by reference to the Report of the Commission. Now, Sir, I do not believe that it is at all likely that a case will ever arise in which a *bonâ fide* crofter will ask for an amount exceeding five years' rental of his holding; but the hon. Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane) furnished me with an argument some time ago, by referring to a case in Arran where a holding rented at £18 was raised to £80, because a house was built on it which was made a lodging-house. Now, Sir, what I wish to arrive at in this Amendment is this—I do not think that it can be the intention of the framers of this Bill to enable crofters who are to hold their land at an agricultural rent—a fair rent fixed by a Government Commission—to turn that land into what we in Scotland call feuing land. I shall leave it to hon. Gentlemen who are more competent then myself to complete this argument.

Amendment proposed,

In page 4, line 39, after "compensation," insert "and Provided always, That such compensation shall not exceed in amount five years' rent of the holding."—(*Mr. Baird.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am afraid that the Government cannot assent to this Amendment, because it is, *primâ facie*, right that a crofter shall get what is the worth of his improvements, irrespective of any artificial stipulation. I would point out that the first condition, both in Clause 8 and Clause 9, is that such improvements are suitable to the holding; and if, therefore, a crofter indulged a fancy for extravagant taste in unsuitable buildings, he would not be paid for them. Under those circumstances, there can be no reason why the full value of the improvements appropriate to the holding should not be paid.

MR. BAIRD: Is it to be understood, then, that, under this Bill, a crofter is to be placed in this position—that if he has been fortunate enough to make some money, he is to have the power of erecting buildings on his holding which will make it impossible for the landlord, unless he is a millionaire, to re-enter upon his property?

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I think, Sir, that every encouragement ought to be given by this House and every friend of the Highlanders to lead them to aspire to better dwellings for themselves. In the case referred to by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down the rent was raised from £18 to £80, because the noble Duke who was the proprietor wanted to get rid of the tenant, who had been guilty of two sins. In the first place, the tenant was a Dissenter, to be which is a great crime in the Isle of Arran; and, in the second place, it was shrewdly suspected that the tenant had dared to vote for a Liberal candidate. Mr. Padwick, who was then acting for the noble Duke, permitted the man to pull down his miserable black dwelling, and to erect a white one, and afterwards sought to raise the rent; but in consequence of the noise made by the newspaper owned by the hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), the noble Duke was compelled to change his plan. May I point out to the Committee, Sir, that the highest rental that you allow under this Bill is £15. That means that, in future, you will not allow a crofter to have a house which requires more than

£75 to build, because if he erects a house beyond that amount, the excess will be confiscated. If there is one fault or weakness amongst these crofters, it is that they are too fond of their black houses, and an attempt ought to be made to provide them with better surroundings than they have now. The effect of this Amendment, however, will be to perpetuate their present miserable condition; and I say this—having some acquaintance with ulmost all the uncivilized peoples of the world—that there are no people who are in a worse state than these, not even in Donegal, or any other part of the West of Ireland. What we want is to enable these people to live in accordance with their intelligence; but if their condition is to be improved, they will want more than 10 years' purchase of the annual value of their holdings or rent.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I hope that hon. Members will keep clear from personal references in the discussions on this Bill. I have heard that there are some people in the West Highlands who have put up houses and use them as lodging-houses. Well, that is a good thing, no doubt; but it might fall hard upon a landlord that where a crofter had built a house quite beyond the requirements of his holding, for the purpose of taking summer boarders, he could force the landlord, in the event of his moving, to compensate him for buildings which would be of no value to the landlord, as far as the agricultural worth of the holding was concerned, and which had been put up without the landlord's consent. Everyone knows that such buildings are extravagances, and the landlord ought not to be called upon to pay for them.

The LORD ADVOCATE: It is exactly to meet such cases that we have put into both clauses the words "suitable to the holding."

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I should not have interposed in this discussion had it not been for the statement the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) has thought worthy of obtruding on the notice of the House—a statement which he has made on three separate occasions. The hon. Member stated that in the county which I represent things of this kind are done—that a man paying a rent of £18 put up, at his own expense, a certain building, and the proprietor came down upon him and made him pay £80 rent. The hon. Member has also asserted that this man was guilty of two crimes—first, of being a Dissenter; and, secondly, of voting Liberal. I am glad to say that the great majority of my constituents in the Island of Arran are Free Church people, and better Free Church people and better Conservatives are not to be found in Scotland. And as to the man having voted Liberal, neither I nor the hon. Member for Caithness know how he voted. But as to the gravamen of the hon. Gentleman's statement, that this tenant was made to pay £80 of rent for what, before certain improvements, he had paid £18 for, I beg to inform him now that he is absolutely mistaken, and that if he cites as his authority merely the illiterate and mendacious journal to which he has referred, I beg to say that a worse authority he could not cite. It is not the fact that the gentleman in question, who is a valued friend of my own, now pays more, or has ever paid more, than £33 for his holding; and the hon. Member is in this position, that he intrudes into this debate a statement intended to reflect on the proprietor of the Island of Arran, merely because that person has the misfortune to differ in politics from him. I think there is far too much of the political position of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway built up upon fables of this kind. If they were held in, as I hope they will be held in in this House, to facts, and if that rule obtained in more popular meetings, we should not find so much popularity following in the train of these Gentlemen, nor so many simple-minded people ready to be deluded by their assertions. The hon. Gentleman stands in the position that was described of another person, possibly of equal eminence and prominence in a similar movement, of whom it was said, that he was an extremely well-informed man, but that he was always wrong in his facts and never right in his figures. That seems to be the case with hon. Gentlemen who bring forward such charges as these in the House.

Dr. CLARK: I am very much obliged for the exhibition of facts we have had from the hon. and learned Gentleman. I did not get my information from the journal in question. I happened to be living in the house when the noble Duke came to look at it. I happened to be there when the rent was raised to £80. I happened to furnish the information in question; and if this is the third time the matter has been brought before the House, it is not the third time I have introduced it. The hon. Gentleman one of the Members for Lanarkshire introduced the case, and stated the facts as accurately as the hon. and learned Gentleman has now stated them again. If we are compelled to introduce matters of this kind and to talk about the crime of being Dissenters, I must inform the Committee that upon this Island, owned almost by one man, the great United Presbyterian Courch has, time after time, asked for sites to build churches, and the noble Duke has always refused them. I pledge my honour to the Committee that the statements I have made are true. My brother-in-law, Mr. Brown, of Paisley, who is pretty well known as an advertiser, had the house in question for the summer holding, and when I was there the lease expired, and the rent was raised to £80. A row was raised, and it was found convenient to reduce the rent. The hon. and learned Gentleman makes statements which are absolutely contrary to the facts, to my personal knowledge. He has been misinformed himself, whilst I spoke from personal knowledge.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): There is one reason I should like to point out to the Committee why I think this demand ought to be acceded to, and that even if the term of five years is not decided upon, some other limit should be fixed. The effect of the clause taken with the Amendments already made, would be this—the period of 30 years, beyond which it was proposed that the improvements claimed by the cottar or his predecessors in the same family were not to be paid for, has been struck out. As I understand it, a tenant who has built a house, it may be 40 years ago, may, after the passing of this Act, claim the value of it from his landlord. If that is so, this *ex post facto* legislation puts an incumbrance on the land as against the owners, and possibly mortgagees may have advanced money on the security of the estate for the purpose of improvement. The effect of this will be that the landlord who has, perhaps, meanwhile had transactions with his property, and probably dealings on the basis of its being unencumbered, may find it subject to encumbrances which he had represented to the mortgagees it was free from. The liability may go back for 100 years, and the mortgability of property may be destroyed; and I understand we are all interested in making estates mortgagable. I wish to ask whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate wishes, by this piece of *ex post facto* legislation, to raise incumbrances into existence of uncertain character and amount, and jeopardize the mortgability of all estates in Scotland to which the Bill relates?

Mr. BAIRD: My intention in this Amendment is to prevent, as far as may be, what I think will be entirely in the cognizance of hon. Members—namely, the threatened possibility of creating a right to use as feuing land, agricultural land. It would be unsuitable to a purely agricultural holding to put up such a house as we have heard of tonight; and it would only be reasonable, in cases where such houses are put up on land let at an agricultural rent, the value of the land being thereby considerably enhanced, to apply the principle of this Amendment. It is to avoid the possibility of tenants holding land at agricultural rents from converting it into feuing land, that I make this proposal.

Mr. GREGORY (Sussex, E. Grinstead): I hope the Committee will not think it necessary to divide on this Amendment. I do not see how you could limit this to the class of cases the hon. Member refers to. The Bill, so far, proposes to give compensation to crofters, subject to certain conditions. One part of a croft, of course, will be in conformity with the whole; and you constitute a tribunal for the purpose of assessing the improvements and seeing that they are suitable to the holdings. Under the circumstances, it would be an ungenerous thing to endeavour to fetter the judgment of the Commissioners, and to cut down the compensation in this way.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I would point out that the cases are likely to be exceedingly few in which the compensation will exceed in amount five years' rent of the holding. The Amendment might lend practical assistance to the Court; but perhaps the hon. Member (Mr. Baird) will see, after the discussion we have had, that very little is to be got by going to a division. Under the circumstances, it may be as well for him to withdraw the proposal.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 11. (Application by crofters for enlargement).

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to move, in page 5, line 2, to leave out the words "five or more." The clause says it shall be lawful for any five or more crofters resident in a crofting parish to apply to the Land Commission for enlargement of their holdings by pasture or grazing land; and the object of my Amendment is to insert "one crofter" in place of "five or more." It seems to me that one individual has as much right to have justice done him as five crofters collectively. I think it a most absurd proposition that a single one of Her Majesty's subjects should not be able to obtain justice. If the Bill passes in its present shape, we should have the right hon. and learned Gentleman accusing the hon. Member for Argyll of doing something to induce the crofters to combine for the purpose of obtaining an enlargement of their holdings. Such agitation should be quite unnecessary, for each individual should have the right to obtain justice from the Land Commission.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 2, to leave out "five or more."—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): The object of this Amendment, as hon. Gentlemen who know the Highlands will perceive, is to take cognizance of the fact that the township or community of holders exists in that part of the country. The Bill does not propose to deal with scattered or solitary individuals, but takes cognizance of the well-known conditions of Highland life. The hon. Member has hardly gone the length of bringing the application down to a single unit, for if his Amendment were accepted, the clause would read—

"It shall be lawful for any crofters resident in any crofting parish, where any landlord or landlords, after application made to him or them, have refused to let to such crofters available pasture or grazing land on reasonable terms for enlarging the holdings of such crofters,"

and so on.

Mr. M'CULLOCH: I think if the right hon. and learned Gentleman will look at a subsequent Amendment of mine, he will see that I propose to alter the plural "crofters" into the singular "crofter."

The LORD ADVOCATE: Then, the result would be that there might be a a solitary person otherwise answering the definition of a crofter, but incapable of doing so, inasmuch as he does not occupy pasture with anyone else, making application for enlargement. The whole scope of this Bill is to recognize the conditions of Highland life, one of which is that there are villagers grouped as it were in the enjoyment of common pasturage, which necessarily implies a plurality of persons. The question arose as to what number should be taken. We asked ourselves—"Shall it be 10, 20, or what?" We thought that in fixing five, we were taking a very moderate limit, probably much below what an existing or previously existing Highland township would be. I observe that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcudbright (Mr. Mark Stewart) thinks the number "ten" more reasonable, and would propose it as an Amendment; but it is a question whether that is not too high. If we are going to recognize the notion of a community at all, it is difficult to see how we can take cognizance of a smaller number than five.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): It seems to me that if you leave out "five," and put in "ten," you would be giving the clause more general application. These parishes in the Highlands are very often large and extensive; and if the statement of five crofters were to be taken as indicating the general expression of resident crofters in the parish, it would not be altogether satisfactory. If you had "ten," you would go over a long and wide area, and you would have a much more definite expression of opinion, which would, at all events, draw the attention of the crofters to a truer feeling of the district. I am anxious that each crofter should have individual justice; but I think that greater justice would be done to all of them, and that all of them would be more likely to have their views properly represented, if it were made necessary that the number should be ten, instead of five.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I shall, of course, support the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for St. Rollox, Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch), as I have one on the Paper in almost identical terms. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate says the Government selected "five" as being the probable number of crofters that would be left in possession of what he would call a township.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I say that should be the minimum number. There might be a single individual.

MR. MACFARLANE: And I do not see why a single individual should be refused justice. The clause says—

"It shall be lawful for any five or more crofters resident in a crofting parish, where any landlord or landlords, after application made to him or them, have refused to let to such crofters available pasture or grazing land on reasonable terms for enlarging the holdings of such crofters, to apply to the Land Commission setting forth that in the said parish there is pasture or grazing land available for the enlargement of such holdings which they are willing to take on lease," &c.

What would the right hon. and learned Gentleman say if an Act of Parliament were passed declaring that, in cases where people feel aggrieved, it shall be necessary, before action can be taken in the High Court of Justice, that five persons shall join in the matter, and that one can not apply alone? I claim for one person as much right to abstract justice as I would claim for five; therefore, I shall support the Amendment of my hon. Friend. The Amendment I have on the Paper would make the clause read—

"It shall be lawful for any one or more crofters resident in a crofting parish,"

and so on.

MR. TREVELYAN (Hawick, &c.): I only wish to make one remark; but I think it will be a practical one. The reason for introducing, in the original Bill, the provision that the application to the Land Commission should be made by a number of crofters was this—at that time it was the intention merely to restore what we believed to be the old historical custom and right of the Highlands—their common grazings on the hill sides. But I observe—that is not the word—I know well that it is the intention of the Government to accede to the unanimous wish of the Scottish Members—of those Scottish Members who were assembled upstairs, which meeting included at least half the Scotch Members in the House of Commons—to omit "pasture and grazing land," and thereby to include in the land that might be allotted by the Land Commission to the crofters, land that might be used for arable purposes. This alters the rigid condition under which alone land could be granted on lease by the Land Commission under the Bill. That may now not only be granted for purposes of common grazings, but likewise for purposes of tillage; therefore, it seems to me it will be well if my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate will consider whether it is necessary or not any longer to keep up the obligation of "five or more crofters." I think that is a reason which, perhaps, has not occurred to the right hon. and learned Gentleman, and probably he will consider it.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The speech we have just listened to, I think, gives matter for thought to everyone who looks forward beyond the mere operation of this Bill to future land legislation in this country. We were told by those responsible for this Bill—and first and chiefly by the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down—that its justification lies in the exceptional circumstances which, according to his view—as to which I do not say anything now—prevailed in the Highlands 80 or 100 years ago. It is held that the crofters in the old days had certain rights—rights which were not in any legal Statute, but which were theirs in equity. On that historical foundation, this Bill was framed; and, in conforming with that historical foundation, this limitation of the joint application of five of these crofter units was required. But it appears that the right hon. Gentleman is now of opinion that the historical standpoint is to be abandoned altogether, and that we are to treat these small tenants in the Highlands as if they were small tenants anywhere else. Then, what is it we come to? This Bill, under these new circumstances, is nothing more nor less than a departure, according to which small tenants should henceforth be allowed to claim fragments of larger farms, against the wishes of the landlords or tenants, and absolutely irrespective of any historical right which they may have had, and solely at the will and pleasure of the Land Commission. I think it will be admitted that what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman puts an entirely new complexion, not only on the Amendment now before us, but on that which is to be proposed by the Government to put arable as well as pasture land in the Bill. Pasture land was to be held in common by the old Highland tenant, but the arable land was to be held separately; so that if you commit yourselves to the principle of compulsory leases, and remove, by adopting this Amendment, the shadowy distinction which the Government have set up between the Highlands and Lowlands, I am unable to see how you will be able to resist the extension, in the future, of this most novel and dangerous principle of land tenure from the two or three counties in which you propose at present to establish it, to the rest of the United Kingdom.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I should be the last to object to the custom of common grazings. I have been accustomed to them all my life in India—we have them also in Surrey—but, as a student of history, I find they do not last for ever. In course of time the communal holdings become the holdings of individuals grouped together for certain limited purposes. It seems strange that it should be made a condition of these tenures in the Highlands, that they should be granted in a reduced communal form, and that the grazings should not be allowed to dissolve themselves into individual holdings with certain common rights, two or three or four individuals being allowed to apply for the benefits of the Bill. I think the Amendment is one that is economically and historically right.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The argument of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Trevelyan) clearly points out that the Amendment, however good it may be in itself—as to which I say nothing just now—will not avail for the purpose of working out the Bill. It is scientifically unsatisfactory; and I will tell the Committee why. He says—and says perfectly correctly—that the original intention was to give rights of common pasture over a tract of land, and it naturally follows from that that the application for that tract of land must be made by more than one individual, because you could not have common rights to exist in one person. That was the original intention of the Bill, and that original intention the Government have now deliberately departed from. ["Hear, hear!"] Yes; but they have only departed from it by doing something different and exceptional to it. They have departed from it in this way, by saying not only will we give common pasture land, which is historical, but we will give also individual possession of arable land, in addition to present holdings—that is not historical. It is plain you must have separate machinery for working out these two things. If we pass this Bill in such a form that it is going to give the crofter additional arable land for his individual occupation, then it is an absolute injustice to refuse the right of one person to apply to the Commission to get a piece of such land; and in that view I thoroughly concur with the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow. On the other hand, if the crofters are going to get common pasture, it is equally clear that it cannot be done on the application of one crofter. It must be done on the application of several, and the Act, when it is passed, must name some number as a minimum. As I said before, it is quite certain that to accept the proposal that one crofter should be able to demand a piece of common pasture would be in itself a gross absurdity; therefore, I think the hon. Member will see that his Amendment as to pasture land, by which he merely strikes out the words "pasture or grazing land" and makes it any land, will not meet the difficulty. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour) has clearly brought out how substantial, how marked, and how strong an alteration this is that is now proposed by the Government. It is a proposal to the effect that a person holding arable land is to be entitled to go to the Land Court and say—"I demand more of the landlord's land." Well, that is novel, and contrary to the principle which was stated when the Bill was brought into this House.

Is there any ground for saying that that proposal falls within the exceptional character which alone was the ground on which the Government brought in this Bill at all? What is the exceptional position of the crofter in the Highlands, as regards the arable part of his croft, either historically or on present fact, that will make his case different from that of any other person to whom a landlord has given a piece of land in any other part of the United Kingdom? If there is no difference, it is plain to the Committee that, by an alteration adopted in this way, you are establishing a new principle under cover of its being to meet an exceptional case. You yourself are utterly unable to state, when it is put to you fairly, any exceptional case whatever. How are you to answer the demand in the future? In this House, when sitting as a House, it has been said, time after time, that the allegation of a thing being exceptional is coming to be of no avail in dealing with future cases. The former case always comes to be treated as a precedent in cases to which it does not apply. When you are not able to state any exception in the case that you have last dealt with, what are you to do? I ask the Government, then, to account for the fact that this Bill is now so absolutely changed in character that it cannot be defended on the grounds on which it was introduced to the House; and, in the second place, I ask them to explain how the double thing that is to be effected by this Bill is to be carried out by the Amendment proposed?

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): If the right hon. Gentlemen opposite will turn to page 248 of the Amendments, they will see that the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) gives them, unfortunately, as we think, all they ask. We desire to have arable land, and we are told we are getting it. It was asked at the meeting to which reference has been made what would be a fair definition of arable land, and the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) defined arable land as—

> "Land that was now, or within seven years had been, under tillage or under a rotation of cropping."

The Lord Advocate proposes to move that the crofters are not to get land—

> "If the land is arable land, which is at the date of the application, or has been within seven years prior thereto, under cereal or green crop, or subject to a rotation of cropping."

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): The suggestion I made—and I think its adoption would get over the difficulty—is that only grazing land should be taken, and that the crofters might convert it into arable land if they thought proper. We are told that in all the Highland parishes and districts in which complaint is made there is a large quantity of land which was once arable, but which has long gone out of cultivation, and is now practically grazing land. If I were a crofter, I should like to get that land back again, rather than to take arable land which may be under a rotation of cropping. The land which has been under grazing for a number of years may prove very good land, just as good as if it had been under a rotation of cropping. Hon. Members from the Northern districts are under the impression that we wish to take land just as we please; but they must recollect that there are two restrictions in respect to the taking of land. In the first place, the Commission is not to take land from a farm under lease—not until the expiry of the lease. Now, the compromise I would suggest is, that the Land Commission should have the right to take arable or grazing land, even from a farm which is under lease. The extent used for arable purposes would not be large, and I do not think there would be any serious infliction upon the tenant. You have this also to recollect—that any remedy you have to give to the Highlands should take effect as quickly as possible. Now, the effect of this clause, as it stands in the Bill, would be that the crofters would not be able to get land of any kind in any district for a number of years. I suggest—and I come back to the Amendment before the Committee—that my hon. Friend the Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch) should withdraw his Amendment in favour of that of the hon. Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane), which would make the clause read "one or more crofters." I think that is certainly a preferable Amendment.

Mr. J. C. BOLTON (Stirlingshire): I wish to say a word or two with reference to the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan). I was one of the Scotch Members present on the occasion to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, and my impression of the views expressed is not the same as that of my right hon. Friend. The point under discussion, as far as I recollect, was the possibility of defining arable and pasture land, taking into consideration the fact that in the Highlands there are many tracts of land which were formerly cultivated, but which are now in pasture. That land is supposed to be better than the ordinary run of hill land; and it was felt that if the words "pasture or grazing" were retained in the Bill, the crofters might be precluded from obtaining any land which under the Definition Clause might be called arable land, although at the time in pasture. My impression is, that the majority of the Members present at that meeting were in favour of omitting the words "pasture or grazing," leaving only the word "land."

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): Right hon. Gentlemen on the opposite Benches have urged that if this Amendment were adopted, it would necessitate, or it would suggest, an extension of some such provision to the Lowlands and to England as well. Sir, I am not opposed to the idea that considerable Land Law reforms are wanted in the Lowlands as well as in the Highlands; but I would point out that there is an obvious distinction between the two cases. Many of the Highlanders can point out plots from which their grandfathers were evicted; they can point out good cultivable land which is now either laid down under grass, or, in some shameful instances, wasted upon deer forests; and it is not to be wondered at that industrious, energetic, and thrifty young men should feel strong indignation that, though they are willing to work this land, they should be excluded from it by its devotion to luxury and sport. I cannot think it is a sufficient concession to lay it down that five men at least must make application before this wrong can be redressed. It has been suggested that agitation and disturbance is necessary before any right can be done. I ask hon. Members to put themselves in the position of a young crofter who knows, by family tradition, that his grandfather or his great grandfather was evicted from a plot of good land which is now used as wintering for deer. I would like to know whether they would not feel that an intolerable wrong was done them if they were called upon to emigrate from their country because they were denied a plot of land which they felt they could cultivate to advantage? I earnestly hope the hon. Member (Mr. M'Culloch) will persevere with his Amendment.

Sir JOHN RAMSDEN (Yorks, W.R., Osgoldcross): I think it must be evident to the Committee that we have now come to the turning point in this Bill. The question is, Do the Government intend to adhere to the principle on which they introduced the Bill, or do they intend to be forced from the position which they originally took up, and to make it a Bill which can be extended by degrees from one part of the country to another, until at last it extends over the whole of the United Kingdom? Now, Sir, I am not the least surprised that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway should propose this Amendment. They entertain very strongly—and they have a perfect right to entertain—the idea that the whole land system of this country is to be broken up; and, no doubt, they think the Bill affords a convenient opportunity for them to drive their opinions home. That is their view; but is that the intention of the Government? Is that the intention of the House of Commons? If that is the intention of the Government, it certainly is not the intention which was put forward in the statement in which the Bill was introduced; and I shall be much surprised to hear that the Government have receded from the position they then took up, and that they intend to make the Bill capable of extension to the whole country. It is evident that this requirement of five or more crofters combining together in order to make this application is, as the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) very truly said, a requirement suited to the special case of the crofters. If the Government depart from that position, and allow any one man to make the application, they will depart entirely from the special case of the crofters, and make the Bill one which is just as applicable to one part of the country as another. I sincerely hope the Lord Advocate will not allow himself to be driven from the position which the Government have taken up.

Dr. CLARK: Before the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Chaplin) rises to address the Committee—for I see he is most anxious to rise—I should like to state the case clearly. To give the crofters grazing land alone would be to give them something which would be of no benefit to them. In winter this land will be useless for grazing purposes, and the stock will die unless the crofters have arable land upon which they can grow wintering. I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman, who has practical knowledge of this subject, whether what I say is not true?

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Clark) alluded to me or not; but if he did, I shall be perfectly ready to express the view I entertain either with regard to arable land or deer forests when the proper time arrives. It appears to me we are now discussing an Amendment which calls upon us to decide whether the number of crofters who are to make this application is to be five, or one, or more. That is the point to which I desire to turn my attention, and, for the reason expressed by my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson), I shall certainly oppose the Amendment. I hope the Government will not think of agreeing to it.

The LORD ADVOCATE: There is no doubt at all that to reduce the number to one would introduce a fundamental alteration in the theory of the Bill. I quite see that it might be matter for consideration whether, at a later part of the clause, machinery having been set in motion by some number of persons, however small, representing the community, there might not be a provision for one individual obtaining an addition to his arable land. I shall be glad to consider, before the Report stage, whether, by a recasting of the clause, some difference may not be made between the application for arable land and grazing land.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin): Does the hon. Gentleman withdraw the Amendment?

Mr. M'CULLOCH: Yes, Sir; I withdraw my Amendment in favour of that of the hon. Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane).

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 2, to leave out the word "five," in order to insert the word "one."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question put, "That the word 'five' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 208; Noes 115: Majority 93.—(Div. List, No. 63.)

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I propose to amend the clause, so that it shall read—"It shall be lawful for any five or more crofters or cottars," and so on. I hope the Committee will agree to this Amendment. All that I ask for the cottars is the right to apply to the Land Commission under the circumstances set forth in the clause, and it will be for the Land Commission to say whether the cottars have any right to what they apply for. I know that, in many instances, landlords in the Highlands will be only too glad to have the words put into the Bill which I propose. We know that many crofters have no money at all; and what, under the circumstances, are the landlords to do with the land, unless they let it out in deer forests? Therefore, I think the House will be right in giving these cottars the necessary land, because it would not only be for their benefit, but for the benefit of the landlords as well, by allowing those who have money to make a proper use of it. It is only a short time ago that nearly all the crofters on an estate in my county were turned out and became labourers. The owners of the estate found work for them, and they are better off than they were; but suppose the landlord dies, and another landlord does not do what is good for the people, should not these men have the right of going to the Land Commission? I repeat that in adopting the Amendment I am about to move, we should confer a boon on the cottars and on the landlords.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 1, after "crofters," insert "or cottars."—(*Dr. R. McDonald.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): The Committee has already rejected the introduction of the words "or cottars" into all the clauses intended to give what I may call the distinctive benefits of the Bill—fair rent and fixity of tenure. But here we have a definition of "cottar" introduced which would be much more inappropriate than it was with regard to fixity of tenure and fair rent. It is true we have on the Paper an Amendment, comprehending under that term a person who is the occupier of a dwelling-house with a garden, but without arable or pasture land. If we were to adopt this Amendment, we should be, so to speak, taking a person who pays no rent for his house, and who, if he does pay, is simply paying rent for a garden, and turning him into a crofter—it would be changing a person from one class into another, and for that I say there is no historical precedent whatever.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): It is amusing to see the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, like the ostrich, hiding his head in the sand. The right hon. and learned Gentleman does not look at the facts, but at a preconceived theory. The object of the Amendment is to allow the Land Commission to give land to the cottars—who were crofters a few years ago, until landlords like Mr. Pirie, the paper maker, and other commercial landlords, changed their position. On the other hand, some landlords have done entirely opposite—for instance, the old historical Conservative landlords—and as far as they are concerned, if I were to become a crofter again, I should very much prefer one of them to a new commercial landlord. I hope it is not useless to appeal to the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate to consider the facts of the case outside legal considerations, to bear in mind that if the Bill is to be worth anything at all to these people, it must be amended, and some provision made for the people to whom this Amendment applies. There are two or three classes of people who have holdings who are outside the Bill altogether. There are a great many crofters and sub-tenants of big farmers, and a great many crofters who are sub-tenants themselves, and who pay rent, or give their service—there are whole classes of whose existence the right hon. and learned Gentleman does not seem to be aware, but who will force themselves upon his attention very soon. Some cottars on estates are taking possession of land and cultivating it, because they do not mean to starve, and something more than policemens' batons will be required to push them off the land, if they are to be pushed off at all. This is the class of men whom we fight for in this House—to give them a chance of being replaced on land from which they have lately been driven, because it has pleased men like Mr. Pirie to change their land into sporting land. If this Amendment is not accepted, one-third of the population of the Highlands will be excluded from the operation of the Bill. I do not know whether it is worth while pressing the matter upon the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate; but I trust he will reconsider it, because, unless he is prepared to assent to some of these Amendments, the Bill is likely to go through the House with some difficulty.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I agree with the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate that, practically, we are excluding the cottars from the Bill altogether. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has proposed an easy mode of death for them. A few weeks ago, we had a division which displaced the Conservative Government on the question of allotments. Will not the right hon. and learned Gentleman make a proposal to grant allotments to these people? I do not ask him to give them "three acres and a cow;" but can he not grant them allotments? I have no doubt that the right hon. and learned Gentleman voted on the division in favour of allotments for the agricultural labourer, and I ask him to think to-night of the vote which he then gave. I do not believe it is of any use wasting the time of the Committee in walking through the Lobbies with 100 Members, while the Government and the Tory Party are against us on every occasion. If I had not known that this was a Crofter Bill for Scotland, I should have judged it to be an Irish Coercion Bill, from the number of Government officials and the followers of the Tory Party who vote against almost every Amendment. I hope the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will consider whether he can do something for the cottars, without converting them into crofters, which I do not desire to see done.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): It would seem that the argument of the hon. Member amounts to this—that a majority is good in every case, except in the House of Commons. It is a new theory. I venture to say that when this Parliament was elected, it was supposed by my right hon. Friend opposite that it represented the people better than they had ever been represented before. But he seems to be repenting of that idea now. The hon. Member for Caithness said a few minutes ago, that if he became a crofter, he would like to have a Tory landlord. Well, we on this side of the House would not be disinclined to agree with him. The hon. Gentleman who moved this Amendment did so, on the ground that he desired to give some land to the cottars; but does the hon. Gentleman imagine that the cottars are right in taking pieces of land, because they happen to live next to deer forests? This is not a proposal to give a piece of land to the cottar, but to add to his holding; it is a proposal to create a holding which is a thing not contemplated by the Bill, and which, if it had been introduced into the Bill, would have prevented its being read a second time.

The LORD ADVOCATE: In dealing with a question of this kind, it is very desirable to be consistent with the general scope of the Bill, however anxious we may be to make some provision for the cottars. With regard to allotments, I think the whole theory was, that they were to be worked out and administered under a system of local government which has not yet come into operation. I hope that, in one part of the country as well as in another, it may be possible to carry out the allotment system; but it is hardly consistent with this particular Bill.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 2, after "crofters," insert "or their subtenants."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I cannot support this Amendment, which is one of the most inadmissible that has been proposed. One of the greatest mischiefs recognized in crofter communities is sub-letting, and the Committee has already passed the 1st clause, which so fully recognizes that evil as to make it a statutory condition that there shall be no sub-letting. The meaning of subletting is that somebody comes into the holding without the cognizance, and probably against the will, of the landlord; and upon what principle it would be possible to set up such a person as claimant against the landlord it is difficult to see.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): This clause will cease to operate at the end of five years. The Amendment only applies to those who are now sub-letters; and I ask the Government whether, by refusing the Amendment, they are going to perpetuate the misery which exists? All we are trying to do is to obviate some of the evils which unfortunately landlords allow to exist.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): The Amendment I am about to move is for the purpose of allowing a subsequent provision to be inserted, the object of which is that tenants when they have grazing land should be allowed to convert it into arable land and hold it individually. The idea which occurred to us was, that grazing land in a crofting parish might be available for the purpose of the crofters as provided by the Bill, and that this grazing land might be made arable. The Land Commission has power to give grazing land, which it is desirable that the crofters should have, and we want that the crofters should hold it individually and treat it as arable land, cultivating it as they think proper.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 4, after "have," insert "either individually or jointly."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I cannot accept this Amendment; but as there might be some doubt about the application of words in the clause to pasture land, I propose to omit the words "pasture or grazing."

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 5, leave out "pasture or grazing."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: This is the time for considering what land the Commission shall have power to deal with. The proposal I made was, that the Commission should have power to take any land useful as pasture or grazing land, and give it to the crofters, and that the latter should be able to treat it as arable land. There is a considerable area of grazing land in the Highlands which was at one time arable. This land, which is good land, should, in our opinion, be available for the crofters in the localities from which they were formerly evicted. The Government propose to extend the powers of the Commission to common land. I think that would be a great mistake; but I should propose that while the Commission should not deal with arable land, they should have power to deal with grazing and pasture lands as if they were common land. It will be years after this Bill is passed before the crofters will have power to get any land; because the whole of the farms are under lease, and therefore the powers proposed to be given to the Commission under this Bill would not be available for the crofters at present. I think the powers of the Commission should be restricted to grazing and pasture land, and that they should extend to existing leases.

The LORD ADVOCATE: That point arises on a later Amendment. It does not arise here at all. If the Committee accept my Amendment, it will, as far as it goes, empower the Commission to deal with all land.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I wish to point out, by way of caution, that if the right hon. and learned Gentleman takes away with one hand what he gives with the other, the concession will not be of much use. I entirely agree with the view taken by the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay).

Question put, and *negatived;* words *left out* accordingly.

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I hope the Committee will consider attentively the point which I am now going to advance. I hope it is merely the result of an oversight on the part of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, that the principle of the Amendment which I am about to move has not been embodied in the Bill, because it wants but little attention and common sense to see that it ought to be embodied there. The Bill certainly says that crofters may apply to the Land Commission, setting forth that there is land available for the enlargement of their holdings "in the said parish;" but my Amendment would enable the Commissioners to deal with land available for the purpose in the parish, "or contiguous to it." If the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate is willing to insert those words, I shall not take up the time of the Committee by saying anything further on the subject; but, otherwise, I shall feel it my duty to point out the reasons why I think my proposal should be adopted. We know that those men were thrown into corners of large estates and large farms; and I ask, if they are not to be allowed to go beyond their parish, what good will the Bill do them? What is the use of saying "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther?" The demand which I make is, in my opinion, a most reasonable one, and one on which I shall ask the Committee to divide unless I receive from the Lord Advocate a satisfactory assurance on the subject. I think it is a most indefensible position to take up to say simply that, because you have taken the arbitrary boundary of a parish, you can do no more. The Commission, moreover, recommended that we should not be bound by parishes, nor by the estates of certain landlords; and that is another reason in support of my contention that there is nothing unreasonable in asking that we should not limit the operation of this clause by the arbitrary divisions of parishes.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 7, after "parish," insert "or contiguous to it."—(*Dr. R. McDonald.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): In a Bill like this, which is not of universal application all over the country, it is necessary to have some territorial unit which necessarily involves the element of arbitrariness. It appeared to us that the most convenient unit was the parochial unit, and therefore that was put into the Bill. If that limit is accepted, of course it follows that it would not be consistent to go outside it; and believing that the Amendment would introduce a great deal of confusion into the working of the measure, I cannot accept it.

Question put, and *negatived.*

On the Motion of The Lord Advocate, the following Amendment made:—In page 5, line 7, leave out the words "pasture or grazing."

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to move, in line 9, to leave out "take on lease," in order to insert the word "rent." This is purely a technical Amendment. I think the word "rent" would be much better than the word "lease" in this matter.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 9, leave out "take on lease," and insert "rent."—(*Dr. R. McDonald.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am afraid that there is a grammatical difficulty; besides it is a lease that we are dealing with, and, therefore, I think the word "lease" is the best.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): At the end of the clause I move to leave out the words "than that of a deer forest, or of a grouse moor, or other sporting purpose." The object of these words in the clause is to exclude from the consideration of the value the recognized and well-known value attaching to lands of a particular character, and under particular circumstances. It may be right, or it may be wrong, to insert these words, but it is certainly a novel proposal; and I shall be very much surprised to hear, if this principle is carried out in its entirety, that, instead of doing good to the Highlanders, it will not do a good deal of harm, financially, to the whole of the country. No doubt, certain lands are let for a variety of reasons; but I presume that it is not to be said that land which is let for sport is an improper letting, in the abstract. Of course, the custom is open to abuse, and whenever that is so, no doubt action should be taken in regard to it for the public good; but this Bill does not affect those cases alone, but strikes generally. No one doubts that what is done in the Highlands in the interests of sport is to get the lands into as primitive a condition as possible. If that is to be held to be wrong in itself, there is an end to the question; but if it is not held to be wrong in itself, is it right, as an abstract ruling, to exclude the value of lands which were let for such purposes? I have never shot a grouse in the Highlands in my life, and I have never had a day's deer stalking in my life, but I indulge in other kinds of sport which suit me better; and I should not like to have it on my conscience that in the pursuit of sport I have taken up land and have rendered it impossible for the crofter, who may want it for his actual livelihood, to take it up. I do, however, object to the principle involved in this clause, except in so far as it deals with an exceptional case, or with circumstances of an exceptional character. I believe that there are lands which are better employed as deer forests and grouse moors than in any other way, because they are not suitable to the sustenance of man. Let me take the case of a grouse moor. Can it by any possibility be made more valuable by making it cease to be grouse moor—would it be more valuable to the population of the district generally? Speaking entirely of the question of value, is that so? I venture to think that it could not be made more valuable. I do not suppose the right hon. and learned Gentleman means to assert that what is now grouse moor was once covered with crofters' holdings, and that that is the reason why this clause should be inserted. Such a statement would be entirely incredible. I admit that where land is close to habitations, and necessary or suitable for enlarging the holdings, it is clearly not proper to take it for the purposes of sport; but the objection which I have to these words is that they state as a principle what is not a principle, and deal generally, instead of dealing with particular cases. The places where there is injustice could be scheduled, and then we could deal with particular cases; but I do object to the idea that the rent which can be obtained for every reasonably preserved piece of ground for the purposes of sport, if it is done within limits, and which may be a good thing for the country generally, is not to be considered as "reasonable terms" for the purposes of this Act.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 12, leave out all after "purpose."—(*Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I think the speech to which we have just listened must make those hon. Members well satisfied who voted against the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for Bute (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) to alter the instruction to the Committee with regard to the fixing of fair rents. I suggested, on that occasion, that the proposed alteration might let in elements of competition which would not be just for the purposes of the Bill, and I incidentally mentioned the case of deer forests. That, however, was objected to and disclaimed by hon. Gentlemen opposite as an unreasonable and extravagant illustration; but it is exactly the argument which my right hon. and learned Friend now puts forward in support of this Amendment. It is not necessary for the purposes of this discussion to go into the much larger question, which has frequently been touched upon, in regard to deer forests generally. I may say that I believe that there are some places which are more fitted for deer forests than for any other purpose; but, Sir, while I say that with respect to some parts, I do not say it with respect to lands which are approximate to hamlets and townships, and which are necessary for the use and service of the men of those places. The Royal Commission quite recognized that, when they pointed out that there had been a great deal of indiscriminate extension of deer forests; and I think they suggested that the limit of land which should be used for deer forest should be 1,000 feet above the level of the sea. Well, that would be difficult to work out; and without going into any definition of the area within which deer forests ought to be prohibited, or within which no recognition should be given to deer forests as institutions consistent with public policy, I think that we are justified in this assertion—that wherever, upon the inquiry of the Commission, it is found that deer forests are close to hamlets or townships, and that the land is reasonably necessary to the community of those places for enlarging their holdings and giving elbow room to the inhabitants—that itself is evidence that it is not land that ought to have been appropriated to the purposes of a deer forest. Unless the right hon. and learned Member is prepared to go back on the division that was taken the other evening, this Amendment appears to me to be unnecessary. In short, Sir, the object of the termination of this clause, as it is drawn, is to exclude from competition, as against the necessities of the community, the fancy values that are sometimes given for deer forests, or for other land for the purposes of sport.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The right hon. and learned Gentleman appears to think that he has made a point when he says that the principle of this Amendment was acted upon on a previous occasion; but I would point out that the two cases are entirely distinct. In the first place, we were dealing with the land in a man's occupation, and I quite agree that when a man, and his father before him, has occupied land, it would not be expedient and it was never contemplated to say—"This land can be used for some other purpose, and shall be taken away from you unless you pay a higher rent." That is one matter; but there is another. The case is different when an owner, in the exercise of his strict legal rights, makes use of his land as a sporting estate, and you say that he shall be compelled to give it up to a tenant whom he does not want, and at a rent which he has no power of fixing. When we exercise the new power proposed by this clause, we ought, at all events, to give to the man from whom land is taken away the value he got for it before it was taken from him. I observed that the right hon. and learned Gentleman in his speech only alluded to the question of deer forests; but the case of grouse moors is also pertinent, and it is very important that they should be considered. I do not wish to raise the question of deer forests. It is a very large one and a very important one, and I hope it will be threshed out in this House, for I think that the more it is threshed out the more the public will see that the wild talk which has been used about deer forests is wholly absurd and erroneous. Looking at this question, not from the owner's point of view, not from the neighbouring tenant's point of view, but from a Highland point of view, I ask the Committee to consider whether the destruction of these properties would be in the interests of the whole community—whether the country at large would be benefited if a deer forest, rated at £2,000 or £3,000 a-year, was absolutely destroyed as a deer forest in order to increase the holdings of the crofters?

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): According to my idea on this question, Sir, the comfort of one family is worth all the deer in the forest. But that is not the question I rose to discuss. I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) whether the crofters are not to have the right of grouse shooting on the common pasture, because if the landlord is to have a rent as well as the exclusive right of killing the grouse the whole question is put in a different light?

The LORD ADVOCATE: I think it is made clear in the 1st clause that the game is reserved to the landlord. I do not think that the value of grouse shootings is likely to be set up as a competitive value against crofters in the same way as deer forests; but I feel that there is a danger of a fancy value being set up in the case of the deer forests, and I think that it ought not to be set up against the requirements of the people.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Question, "That the Clause, as amended, be added to the Bill," put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress.

House *resumed.*

Mr. SPEAKER: What day will the Committee sit again?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): To-morrow at 2 o'clock, Sir. Hon. Members will remember that this is strictly in accordance with what the Prime Minister said earlier in the Sitting. We have got so far with the Bill that we hope with a Morning Sitting we may be able to finish it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee sit again Tomorrow at Two of the clock."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I do not think that the Motion is in strict accordance with what the Prime Minister said. What the right hon. Gentleman said was that he would take a Morning Sitting if it were the general wish of the House, and if there were any reasonable probability of the Bill getting through Committee. Well, Sir, if any hon. Member will take the trouble to look at the Paper they will find that there are a great many Amendments still to be discussed; and I think there is grave doubt that it will be possible to complete the Committee stage of the Bill by 7 o'clock tomorrow. I should not by any means wish to oppose the proposal which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has just made if it be the general opinion of the House that the Bill is likely to be concluded to-morrow; but I think we should have some further assurances on this subject.

The LORD ADVOCATE: I am not surprised at the right hon. Gentleman looking at the bulk of the Amendments that remain on the Paper; but I do not think we can fairly judge from them. In the first place, there are a great many new clauses which are entirely non-contentious. Some others of the Amendments will be ruled out of Order, and we believe that those which remain will be concluded at a Morning Sitting. Of course, it is in the event of its being the wish of the House that the Government propose to take the Morning Sitting; but we were sanguine enough to think, when I made the Motion, that it was the universal desire of the House.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): We have only four more questions to bring forward, and only two of them are important.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Hon. Members will have observed that nearly all the speeches and Motions on this matter have come from the other side of the House; but we on this side have several important questions to bring forward, and we ought to be allowed some time for the discussion of them. We have at least four important matters to bring forward, and I would point out that, apart from new clauses, there are three times as many Amendments yet to be disposed of as have been disposed of this evening, and they are sure to take some time. We have only half the time to do it, so that we shall have to go six times as fast as we have done to-day. I hope that the action of those who sit upon this side of the House has given abundant proof that we have no desire to obstruct the Bill. This will be apparent from the fact that neither in the number of the Amendments nor in the length of our speeches have we been anything but moderate.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): It seems to me that we are beginning very early in the Session with Morning Sittings. I have a Motion down first for to-morrow night, and the hon. Member for Hereford (Mr. Duckham) has a very important one on the Paper dealing with contagious diseases amongst cattle and the transit of cattle. There are other Motions on the Paper; but we all know that if there is a Morning Sitting on this Bill the rights of private Members at 9 o'clock will be worth little or nothing. At the same time, I do not wish to interfere with the course of work; but, having to be in a Committee at 12 o'clock, it would be a great disappointment to me to be unable to come down here to hear the rest of the discussion upon this Bill. I believe there are many other Members of the House who will be in the same position. Though I do not wish to oppose the Motion, I desire to put in a protest against the commencement of Morning Sittings thus early in the Session.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I do hope the Government will not give way in this matter; but that, as there is such a general feeling on the point, they will take a Morning Sitting. There is some hope that the Bill may be finished at a Morning Sitting. There is a principle to be discussed, which is not included in the Irish Act, and which, if it is not discussed to-morrow, may have to be postponed indefinitely—I refer to the principle that the fair rent should be fixed not from the date of hearing, but from the date of the payment of the last gale.

Mr. A. R. D. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): I am glad that the Government have adopted the course of arranging for a Morning Sitting to-morrow. There is another matter on the Paper for to-morrow night which is of interest to Scotland, and I do trust that the Government will do their best to make a House for us in the evening, so as to make a real working day of to-morrow.

Sir JOHN RAMSDEN (York, W. R., Osgoldcross): I must take leave to add my appeal to that of the hon. Baronet the Member for Barnard Castle. We are now between 1 and 2 o'clock in the morning, and it is proposed, without giving any Notice whatever, and after a great many hon. Members who take a great interest in the Bill have gone away, to proceed with the measure this very day. I am convinced there will be a great number of Members who desire to take part in debate on the Bill prevented from so doing by this sudden resolve to hold a Morning Sitting. For myself, I have to address my constituents in Yorkshire at 2 o'clock to-day; and I, therefore, shall not be able to be here at the Sitting, which will be a great disappointment to me. I think the Government should give more Notice—at least three or four days—of their intention to hold a Morning Sitting.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): I cannot but regret that the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister is not in his place. I do not see any Member of the Cabinet on the Front Ministerial Bench. I distinctly understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that there would not be a Morning Sitting unless it was the general wish of the House. Well, the right hon. Baronet sitting below me (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has objected to a Morning Sitting, and two hon. Baronets and much-respected Members on the other side have also objected; and I must say that after the statement of the Prime Minister, if this Motion is pressed by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, I shall consider it a distinct breach of faith.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): I would remind my hon. Friends that the Prime Minister distinctly stated at the beginning of this Sitting that if it was a general feeling of the House that a Morning Sitting should be given to finish the Bill he thought that course would be a proper one. Therefore, the hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Fowler) is mistaken in supposing that this Motion has been sprung upon the House at ths moment. Of course, if there was a general feeling that there should not be a Morning Sitting it would not be taken; but, so far as I can gather from both sides of the House, the objection to the course proposed is not a very considerable one. It is stated on this side of the House that every effort will be made to finish the Bill to-morrow, and that the debate is not likely to be extensive on any of the Amendments. I admit that hon. Members on the other side of the House have shown great forbearance in the discussion of the Bill, and I am sure that a large amount of the time of the House will be willingly accorded to them for the discussion of any proposals they may have to bring forward or views they may have to submit at the next Sitting.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I have not troubled the House much on this matter; but I venture, differing from some hon. and right hon. Friends on this side of the House, to think that if we did agree to a Morning Sitting we might be in a fair way to finish the Bill. At any rate, I think we ought to try to finish the Bill after a little needful rest.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I will explain, after what my right hon. Friend behind me has said, that I think right hon. Gentlemen opposite understood that I did not intend to raise any objection on my own part. If there is any real desire on the part of the House to proceed with the Bill to-morrow I shall offer no further objection to it.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

POOR RELIEF (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

[BILL 155.] COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Short title) *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Extension of power to grant outdoor relief).

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton) I beg to move the first of the Amendments which stand upon the Paper in his name.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 8, to leave out the words "thirty-first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six," and insert the words "thirtieth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am sorry that I cannot accept this Amendment. The effect of the alteration with subsequent Amendments which the hon. Member proposes would be to extend the scope of the Bill in all directions. The Bill is one to meet a temporary emergency, and I cannot accept any Amendment extending the date of its operation.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): The next Amendment I have to move for my hon. Friend is one that I think the right hon. Gentleman opposite can very properly accept. Its object is to include in the relief fuel as well as food—the one being as necessary as the other.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 11, after the word "food," insert the words "and fuel."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Yes; we can accept that.

Mr. FITZGERALD (Cambridge): It seems to me that the word "and" before "fuel" does not convey what the hon. and learned Member means. He probably wishes to use the word "or," because the words "food and fuel" would imply that the one could not be given without the other. I do not offer opposition to both being given; but I think that if the Amendment were altered as I suggest it would make it clearer.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): If you put in "guardians to administer outdoor relief in food or fuel," it would be, perhaps, more satisfactory.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 11, after the word "food," to insert the words "or fuel."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I would ask the right hon. Gentleman opposite if he can agree to the next Amendment of my hon. Friend, namely—

In page 1, line 20, to leave out all after "to," to end of line 21, and insert "any electoral division or divisions, and may, from time to time, renew any order so revoked."

The matter is not one that I feel inclined to press an opinion upon against the Government, who must have much better information upon this matter than we have. I simply move the Amendment for the purpose of eliciting from the Government their view concerning it. I think, however, there is something in what my hon. Friend (Mr. Sexton) meant.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 20, leave out all the words after "to," to end of line 21, and insert the words "any electoral division or divisions, and may, from time to time, renew any order so revoked."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Bill as it stands, I think, is right. We have power to revoke orders generally, or re-enact them generally. The Amendment of the hon. Member would deprive us of some part of the power we possess, without giving us anything in substitution for it.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): We have had from time to time different Bills of this kind introduced. I think we ought to be able, by having a resident Lord Lieutenant in Ireland with power to deal with these matters, to get what we want without coming to Parliament from time to time. However, I will not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I beg to propose the Amendment which stands in my name as follows:—

Page 1, line 26, after "revoked," insert,—"Provided also, That in a union in which, in the opinion of the Local Government Board, there may be reason to apprehend delay or difficulty on the part of the guardians in administering relief outside of the workhouse, the Local Government Board shall themselves make such provision as aforesaid."

My Amendment is intended to meet the case of Unions, which, within my own knowledge, constantly refuse outdoor relief. The Union in my district during the whole time of its existence has never given any outdoor relief whatever, and I was astonished to hear to-night that the relieving officer of that district has received his pension. If that means that for the future there is to be no relieving officer I shall take even stronger exception to the state of things there. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has already, I think, given some intimation in reply to an hon. Member on these Benches that this relief may be distributed by Committees. It seems to me that much more effectual relief could be given in that way than could be given by the cumbrous machinery of the Boards of Guardians. It is because I think that that I have put down this Amendment. I am quite in the hands of the Government in regard to it.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 26, after the word "revoked," to insert the words—"Provided also, That in a union in which, in the opinion of the Local Government Board, there may be reason to apprehend delay or difficulty on the part of the guardians in administering relief outside of the workhouse, the Local Government Board shall themselves make such provision as aforesaid." —(*Mr. O'Doherty.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): When the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon) made a proposal of this kind in the debate on the second reading I felt very much inclined to go with his intention. But on making inquiries I found that there was considerable objection entertained to the course that I then thought was feasible. An objection which seems to me to be a good one is this—that the Guardians might, perhaps, for the purpose of saving their rates, stop all outdoor relief, ordinary as well as extraordinary, if we adopted this plan and put the whole responsibility on the Local Government Board. What we propose to do is to authorize the Local Government Board to send down one or more temporary Inspectors carefully to supervize the administration of relief; and if they find that Boards of Guardians are not doing their duty, and are lending themselves to any attempt to bring about a miscarriage of the Act, they will exercise their full powers. Under the circumstances, I do not think it will be advisable to assent to the proposal.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): When the hon. Member put this Amendment on the Paper it struck me that it was a very important one, for the reason that in one particular Union in Donegal in the time of the deepest distress, when everybody recognized that something exceptional was absolutely necessary to save the lives of the people the Board of Guardians of that Union persistently refused, under the direction of the Chairman, to issue one single farthing in the shape of outdoor relief. I have here a Return of the number of persons in receipt of indoor and outdoor relief in 1881, 1882, and 1883; and though in every other Union in Ireland, especially in the scheduled districts of the earlier Relief Act, there was abundant outdoor relief given, and though in other Unions in Donegal itself sometimes the cases went up to nearly 400 in a single Union, in all these three years the Guardians of Dunfanaghy refused to give any outdoor relief at all. This was due to the action of a single man, Mr. Oldford, a magistrate and landowner. The holdings on his property are all small, valued at under £4, and under the existing law the poor rate charges are defrayed especially by the landlord. This gentleman considers that every 1*d*. given in outdoor relief is a charge upon his own pocket; and the consequence is that there is no such thing, and never has been any such thing, as outdoor relief given in the Union of Dunfanaghy. If the right hon. Gentleman, by means of his Inspectors, is in a position to set aside the decision of Mr. Oldford's Board, who are simply his creatures, and if in spite of the opposition of the Guardians you can prevent outdoor relief being withheld, there will be no objection to the proposal being accepted. But I do not see how the right hon. Gentleman reconciles this with his previous statement that the Local Government Board declines to accept responsibility in these matters, as it might thereby cause Boards of Guardians to neglect their other duties. I do not see how the thing is to operate without the authority of the Local Government Board being brought in to supersede that of the Guardians.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The authority of the Local Government Board will be brought in; but my hon. Friend must be aware that the Local Government Board has power to dissolve Boards of Guardians if, through their own fault, their duties are not duly and properly discharged. If a temporary Inspector goes down to a district and finds that outdoor relief is not given according to the terms of the Act, it is competent for him to recommend the Local Government Board to appoint Vice Guardians, and to intrust them with the management of the Unions. That course will unquestionably be taken if the spirit and intention of the Act are not carried out.

Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): After the statement of the right hon. Gentleman I do not intend to press this Amendment; but unless something of an effectual character is put into the Bill, either now or on Report, I am afraid you will find it difficult to get the Local Government Board to induce the Guardians to put the Act in force.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): We have got an important pledge from the right hon. Gentleman to the effect that unless Boards of Guardians properly discharge their duties they will be dissolved.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Clause *agreed to*.

Clause 3 (Revival of 46 & 47 Vict. c. 24, ss. 1 and 2).

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Instead of the Amendment upon the Paper, I might, perhaps, move to leave out all the words after the word "Act," in line 7, down to the end of the sub-section. As you have put the total cost in the Bill at £40,000, I think the better course would be to leave it to the discretion of the Local Government Board as to the period over which this expenditure shall continue. My view is that it is undesirable that the Local Government Board of Ireland should be continually coming to Parliament to relieve their local and limited distress, and that it would be well to trust the Local Government Board entirely, without binding them to a specified time. Parliament has fixed an amount beyond which they cannot go; why, therefore, should the time be limited? I have no doubt we shall be able to relieve the existing distress in the time here set down, still I do not see why, when we come to the 31st of March, and fresh necessities arise, we should have to come to Parliament again for a new Bill.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 7, to leave out all the words after the word "Act," to the end of the sub-section.—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The answer to this, as I have already said, is that the Bill is brought in for a merely temporary purpose. The hon. and learned Member says, truly enough, that it may be necessary on some future day to extend this operation; but we must remember that we may spend the whole of the money at our disposal before the date in the Bill. I hope it may not be so; but if that should happen, and this Amendment is accepted, the clause will be left without any efficacy at all.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): At any rate, the Amendment can do no harm, and it might possibly do some good. I do not see why it should not be accepted; but, at any rate, I will not divide the Committee on the question.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I wish to move, in page 2, line 11, after "Act," to insert "either as a whole Union or as containing a named Electoral Division." I desire that the Act should include not only the whole Union, but a part of it. At present the Schedule is limited to the whole Union; but I think there are some Unions in which the Electoral Divisions should be put in the Schedule. Poverty does not go by sudden jumps—that is to say, it does not become general all at once. The Union of Tuam may be better off than most of the Unions, but certainly two of them are not so well off as some of the better parts of the five Unions, and I may say the object of my Amendment is to prepare the way for the insertion at the end of the page after "Westport," of the words "the Electoral Division of Tuam, in the Tuam Union." If the Electoral Division of Tuam is included, I have no doubt that the inclusion of two or three other Unions near it would be proposed, Loughrea for for instance. That would be a very good one to introduce. The amount which would have to be expended upon these Electoral Divisions would come altogether to a very small sum, probably not more than £1,000 or £2,000 in the £40,000. Probably not more than six Electoral Divisions would come under this Amendment, and they would take a very small part of the Church money to be expended under this Bill. I would beg the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to give us liberty to insert such Electoral Divisions in the neighbourhood of these five Unions which, though not in the Unions themselves, are still within the reach of their poverty. So far as my experience goes, I may say that poverty shows itself in the towns more than in any other parts of these Unions. It shows itself in the place I speak of—namely, Tuam—more than anywhere else. The statistics for the year 1880 show that there was more indoor relief in that Union than anywhere else in the whole of Ireland. The gross total was greater than that in two or three of these Unions. There is a strong case indeed for the inclusion of the Electoral Division of Tuam. The rates there would have increased very largely only that they have reached the maximum. When the rates do that they are spread over the whole Union. The Tuam Electoral Division is now at the highest point it can reach, so far as rates are concerned, unless the whole average of the Union is raised. I would strongly urge the right hon. Gentleman to accept this Amendment, as it would afterwards allow several Electoral Divisions to be put in. I do not believe it would be out of order, later on, to move the Amendment I have given Notice of at the bottom of the page; but I think it would be rather more in Order if the present Amendment were accepted first. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give me power to move these words at the bottom of the page.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is difficult to construe. I do not see how it could run with the previous words.

COLONEL NOLAN: It would simplify matters if you would tell me that I can put in an Electoral Division with the whole Union.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see how the Amendment will run; but perhaps the Chief Secretary will. I will put the Amendment as proposed.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 11, after the word "Act," to insert the words "either as a whole Union or as containing a named Electoral Division."—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I think I understand what the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel Nolan) means; but I am afraid I cannot assent to the Amendment. It practically makes no great difference whether a Union at large is named in the Bill, or certain specified Electoral Divisions, because the grant is in all cases, as the hon. and gallant Gentleman knows, an Electoral Division grant, and it is directed to be made with reference to the pressure of the distress in the particular Electoral Divisions. We may, therefore, fairly presume that the Electoral Divisions, as now proposed to be put in the Schedule, are those which the Government will select. Under these circumstances I cannot consent to the Amendment. Now, as to Tuam, the circumstances of that particular place do not seriously justify its inclusion in the Schedule. The small valuation, the large population, and the high rate of other Divisions, are the reasons why they are included in the Schedule. In the case of Tuam there are no such reasons. The rate there is very little higher than the average rate over the whole of Ireland, and it is 2*s.* in the pound lower than the lowest rate in the Scheduled Unions. For these reasons I can hold out no hope of including Tuam in the Schedule.

COLONEL NOLAN: Although there will be great disappointment felt, and although the accuracy of the information of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is very much challenged in a large portion of the West of Ireland, I think I had better ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Mr. Courtney, I beg to move to insert after "Act," in line 11—

"The grants may be made to the Local Government Board or any other body or persons on such terms as the Lord Lieutenant may approve for the relief of distress within the limits of the scheduled Unions."

Now, this proposal is made with the view of meeting certain exceptional cases. I do not want to throw any discredit or doubt on the honesty and good intentions of the Boards of Guardians in the West of Ireland; but I hold from my own local knowledge that the people of the scheduled Unions are really in a very critical condition, and that the money to be granted under this Bill must necessarily be administered quickly to be of any service to them. I am strongly of opinion that it will reach them more rapidly and effectually through the machinery which is now actually in operation than through any machinery which the Board of Guardians can get into operation without extra expense; and I may point out to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary that the words I have used are taken from the 20th section of "The Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act, 1882," by which Act a large sum of money was set aside to assist the emigration of the people of these very scheduled Unions. I cannot see, therefore, what objection can be raised to my proposal, the more especially if I succeed in convincing the Chief Secretary that its operation will lead to good results; and I think that nobody who has given any attention to the condition of things which chiefly brought about the introduction of this Bill can doubt for a moment that the proposal I make is a practical proposal, and one calculated to make the Bill a great deal more effectual than it will be without it. Now, the Chief Secretary has said that one of the strongest arguments that have been placed before him in opposition to my suggestion is that the Guardians will probably stop all ordinary outdoor relief if a grant of money is made to a Relief Committee or to some individual for administration. I do not see that there is any force in that argument at all, because the Act specially provides that a grant shall be made in relief of certain electoral districts of a Union; and I take it that the money must be spent within those electoral districts. Well, the electoral districts chiefly contemplated by this Bill are in the most remote parts of large Unions, and far away from where the Boards of Guardians meet; and I am convinced that at this moment the Boards of Guardians are not giving—indeed, they have not given for some time—any

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 7, to leave out all the words after the word "Act," to the end of the sub-section.—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The answer to this, as I have already said, is that the Bill is brought in for a merely temporary purpose. The hon. and learned Member says, truly enough, that it may be necessary on some future day to extend this operation; but we must remember that we may spend the whole of the money at our disposal before the date in the Bill. I hope it may not be so; but if that should happen, and this Amendment is accepted, the clause will be left without any efficacy at all.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): At any rate, the Amendment can do no harm, and it might possibly do some good. I do not see why it should not be accepted; but, at any rate, I will not divide the Committee on the question.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I wish to move, in page 2, line 11, after "Act," to insert "either as a whole Union or as containing a named Electoral Division." I desire that the Act should include not only the whole Union, but a part of it. At present the Schedule is limited to the whole Union; but I think there are some Unions in which the Electoral Divisions should be put in the Schedule. Poverty does not go by sudden jumps—that is to say, it does not become general all at once. The Union of Tuam may be better off than most of the Unions, but certainly two of them are not so well off as some of the better parts of the five Unions, and I may say the object of my Amendment is to prepare the way for the insertion at the end of the page after "Westport," of the words "the Electoral Division of Tuam, in the Tuam Union." If the Electoral Division of Tuam is included, I have no doubt that the inclusion of two or three other Unions near it would be proposed, Loughrea for for instance. That would be a very good one to introduce. The amount which would have to be expended upon these Electoral Divisions would come altogether to a very small sum, probably not more than £1,000 or £2,000 in the £40,000. Probably not more than six Electoral Divisions would come under this Amendment, and they would take a very small part of the Church money to be expended under this Bill. I would beg the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to give us liberty to insert such Electoral Divisions in the neighbourhood of these five Unions which, though not in the Unions themselves, are still within the reach of their poverty. So far as my experience goes, I may say that poverty shows itself in the towns more than in any other parts of these Unions. It shows itself in the place I speak of—namely, Tuam—more than anywhere else. The statistics for the year 1880 show that there was more indoor relief in that Union than anywhere else in the whole of Ireland. The gross total was greater than that in two or three of these Unions. There is a strong case indeed for the inclusion of the Electoral Division of Tuam. The rates there would have increased very largely only that they have reached the maximum. When the rates do that they are spread over the whole Union. The Tuam Electoral Division is now at the highest point it can reach, so far as rates are concerned, unless the whole average of the Union is raised. I would strongly urge the right hon. Gentleman to accept this Amendment, as it would afterwards allow several Electoral Divisions to be put in. I do not believe it would be out of order, later on, to move the Amendment I have given Notice of at the bottom of the page; but I think it would be rather more in Order if the present Amendment were accepted first. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give me power to move these words at the bottom of the page.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is difficult to construe. I do not see how it could run with the previous words.

COLONEL NOLAN: It would simplify matters if you would tell me that I can put in an Electoral Division with the whole Union.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see how the Amendment will run; but perhaps the Chief Secretary will. I will put the Amendment as proposed.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 11, after the word "Act," to insert the words "either as a whole Union or as containing a named Electoral Division."—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."'

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I think I understand what the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel Nolan) means; but I am afraid I cannot assent to the Amendment. It practically makes no great difference whether a Union at large is named in the Bill, or certain specified Electoral Divisions, because the grant is in all cases, as the hon. and gallant Gentleman knows, an Electoral Division grant, and it is directed to be made with reference to the pressure of the distress in the particular Electoral Divisions. We may, therefore, fairly presume that the Electoral Divisions, as now proposed to be put in the Schedule, are those which the Government will select. Under these circumstances I cannot consent to the Amendment. Now, as to Tuam, the circumstances of that particular place do not seriously justify its inclusion in the Schedule. The small valuation, the large population, and the high rate of other Divisions, are the reasons why they are included in the Schedule. In the case of Tuam there are no such reasons. The rate there is very little higher than the average rate over the whole of Ireland, and it is 2*s.* in the pound lower than the lowest rate in the Scheduled Unions. For these reasons I can hold out no hope of including Tuam in the Schedule.

COLONEL NOLAN: Although there will be great disappointment felt, and although the accuracy of the information of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is very much challenged in a large portion of the West of Ireland, I think I had better ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Mr. Courtney, I beg to move to insert after "Act," in line 11—

"The grants may be made to the Local Government Board or any other body or persons on such terms as the Lord Lieutenant may approve for the relief of distress within the limits of the scheduled Unions."

Now, this proposal is made with the view of meeting certain exceptional cases. I do not want to throw any discredit or doubt on the honesty and good intentions of the Boards of Guardians in the West of Ireland; but I hold from my own local knowledge that the people of the scheduled Unions are really in a very critical condition, and that the money to be granted under this Bill must necessarily be administered quickly to be of any service to them. I am strongly of opinion that it will reach them more rapidly and effectually through the machinery which is now actually in operation than through any machinery which the Board of Guardians can get into operation without extra expense; and I may point out to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary that the words I have used are taken from the 20th section of "The Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act, 1882," by which Act a large sum of money was set aside to assist the emigration of the people of these very scheduled Unions. I cannot see, therefore, what objection can be raised to my proposal, the more especially if I succeed in convincing the Chief Secretary that its operation will lead to good results; and I think that nobody who has given any attention to the condition of things which chiefly brought about the introduction of this Bill can doubt for a moment that the proposal I make is a practical proposal, and one calculated to make the Bill a great deal more effectual than it will be without it. Now, the Chief Secretary has said that one of the strongest arguments that have been placed before him in opposition to my suggestion is that the Guardians will probably stop all ordinary outdoor relief if a grant of money is made to a Relief Committee or to some individual for administration. I do not see that there is any force in that argument at all, because the Act specially provides that a grant shall be made in relief of certain electoral districts of a Union; and I take it that the money must be spent within those electoral districts. Well, the electoral districts chiefly contemplated by this Bill are in the most remote parts of large Unions, and far away from where the Boards of Guardians meet; and I am convinced that at this moment the Boards of Guardians are not giving—indeed, they have not given for some time—any outdoor relief in the Islands on the West Coast. What the inhabitants are relying upon is the relief fund raised in this country and in Ireland. I do not think the Guardians of the Unions are able to give outdoor relief; the Unions are exceedingly impoverished, and the rates are at such a high figure that they very nearly swallow all the resources of the inhabitants. What I particularly wish to impress upon the Chief Secretary is that my proposition simply amounts to an indication to the Lord Lieutenant, who will, no doubt, act after consultation with the Local Government Board, that he is at liberty to make a departure from the ordinary practice whenever he thinks the circumstances of any particular Union or district require it. What I want is that the Lord Lieutenant, who, as I am informed, is taking a very warm and deep interest in this question of the relief of distress, and who is in personal communication with Mr. Brady, Mr. Tuke, and other individuals who are exerting themselves in a very noble way to relieve these unfortunate people, shall have the discretion to place money at the command of men like Mr. Brady and Mr. Tuke, where he is convinced that the necessity is urgent, or where he is convinced that the condition of things is such that it is all but impossible for the Guardians to administer relief. Achill Island and Tory Island, for instance, are places where the Guardians cannot administer relief. The Guardians have their private business to attend to, and it can hardly be expected they will do the work which Mr. Brady and Mr. Tuke and other gentlemen have undertaken. Why allow ourselves to be tied down by red tape in this matter? Why not avail ourselves of the machinery which has been created by the few generous-hearted men who are working nobly in the relief of these distressed people? I am satisfied that my proposition will not only result in efficiency, but in economy.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 11, after the word "Act," to insert the words "the grants to be made to the Local Government Board or any other body or persons on such terms as the Lord Lieutenant may approve for the relief of distress within the limits of the scheduled Unions."—(*Mr. Dillon.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Dillon

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I have not very much to add to what I stated in reply to the hon. Gentleman below the Gangway. I do not think I am generally open to the charge of being pedantic in regard to Poor Law administration, or, indeed, in regard to any other branch of administration; but I do feel that it is a very serious thing—it is an entirely new departure—to supersede the Local Authority by private persons unofficially organized, and with no real official responsibility. I am sure my hon. Friend (Mr. Dillon) must feel that it is so. It would be difficult to exercise that control over this voluntary Committee, that it is most important and most indispensable should be exercised over any Body administering public funds. Then, I think, with all respect to my hon. Friend, that the argument which I used in reply to the hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway is a sound argument. I am perfectly satisfied that to make funds in the hands of private persons available for administration would tend to discourage Boards of Guardians from giving outdoor relief; it would undoubtedly tempt them to save the rates and to throw all the responsibility upon the Local Government Board. The Lord Lieutenant, as the hon. Gentleman says, will, no doubt, be advised by the Local Government Board. The hon. Gentleman says it will be entirely in the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant to set the machinery created by the Relief Committee in motion. As a matter of fact, the Local Government Board are strongly adverse to this particular method of administering relief, therefore it is pretty certain the Lord Lieutenant will be hostile to the course suggested. It is true that the words proposed to be inserted here are to be found in another Act; but then that Act had a very different object in view. A course which was expedient in the case of the Arrears Act does not seem to me to be equally expedient in this case. Under these circumstances I must withhold, though with great reluctance, my assent to the Amendment.

MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon): Of course, I can see a great deal of force in what the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. John Morley) has said; but there is one particular in which I think his remarks do not apply. The right hon. Gentleman is anxious not to impair the action of Boards of Guardians; but there are certain actions which the Guardians are incapable of performing. Perhaps it is not within the knowledge of all hon. Members that Mr. Tuke and some of his friends undertook to supply seed to the inhabitants of the Island of Achill, without which the whole Island would have gone without unsown potatoes, and there would certainly have been a famine. Mr. Tuke and his friends have carried out what they undertook; they have supplied the whole of the inhabitants of the Island of Achill with seed potatoes at an expense of over £1,500. When he went over to Ireland Mr. Tuke found that there was a line along the Coast where the potatoes had been destroyed by the violent storms of last year to the same extent as in the Island of Achill; and here again, unless someone steps in to supply seed, there will be famine this year. But when we came to look at the matter we found that a much larger expenditure is required than the sum for which we made ourselves responsible—indeed it is probable that the expenditure may rise to £4,000. Now, the distribution of seed is a thing which the Guardians cannot do; and, therefore, we should not be interfering with them in any way if we entrusted this duty to a private Committee. Moreover, I think I can suggest a plan to prevent any abuse of the funds. If the Government will allow a part of this £40,000 — say a sum not exceeding £2,000—to be given towards meeting the further claims upon the Relief Committee, Mr. Tuke and his friends are perfectly willing to provide an equal amount. I do not think it is unreasonable to ask the Government to provide half the sum which is necessary to complete the work which Mr. Tuke has undertaken. I have not moved an Amendment on this point; but I think the Government would do well to consider whether it is not possible for them to meet us in the way I suggest. If we are fairly met by the Government I am in a position to promise that the money will be forthcoming on the part of Mr. Tuke and his friends.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): I have a suggestion to make to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary which I think will meet with his acceptance; it is that he should assent to this Amendmeut upon the understanding that it applies to the Islands only. As a general rule Relief Committees are not wanted in inland places, because the Guardians live there. Mr. Brady likes to go to these Islands. I do not know Mr. Tuke's habits, but he may like going there also. Besides, there is the fact that in these Islands you have the clergymen, and you can trust them to see that relief is properly administered. I see great reason why the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) should be accepted for the Islands only. As the Chairman of the Clifden Union I should not advocate its operation generally; but if we confined it to the Islands I am persuaded we should not interfere with the work of the Poor Law Guardians.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): May I ask the Chief Secretary whether, when the Local Government Board were expressing their views on this point, they informed him what amount of money they entrusted to Mr. Tuke three years ago for the purpose of assisting the Irish people to emigrate, and also whether we are to understand that Mr. Tuke and the benevolent gentlemen who were considered good enough to emigrate the Irish people by the 1,000 are untrustworthy when it is a question of saving the lives of the people? Is that the argument of the Local Government Board? Probably it will be found that tens of thousands of pounds were for emigration purposes intrusted into the hands of the very people who the Local Government Board now say are not trustworthy. A more conceited lot of people than the Local Government Board in Ireland never cursed any country. This opposition is only a dodge. The Local Government Board will appoint special Inspectors at £300, £400, and £500 a-year, and pay them out of this fund. These Inspectors, who can only be compared with mummies of the Persian epoch, will go down to the distressed districts to administer this Act, and then these persons, who probably never had the smallest experience in the administering of relief, will send up Reports, and they will be read out by the Irish Secretary as the official intelligence of Ireland. The Local Government Board appoint their own parasites, and then, when Members of the House of Commons want information, they find it supplied by the most ignorant people. I agree that the argument of the Chief Secretary that it is dangerous to supersede a Local Authority is a strong one; but what is the qualification for Guardians in the scheduled districts? You will probably find that no man may be a Poor Law Guardian unless he has a £30 valuation; whereas in some parts of Ireland, not one-tenth as poor as these Western districts, you find the qualification for Guardian is a £10 valuation. In these Western districts there are no men of £30 valuations, except people of a class who have very little sympathy with these poor cottars, and these are the people who will not give outdoor relief. We do not mean an attack on the Local Government Board, but we mean an attack on the thirty pounders. These men have officials like George Brown and others, who before the revolution sat in this House, as Whigs, sent down to administer this relief when there are gentlemen like Mr. Tuke and Mr. Brady and this Relief Committee, the very persons to whom you entrusted, for emigration purposes, a sum of money much larger than it is necessary to entrust them with now, on the spot. Before I sit down I should like to say of Mr. Brady that I do not know any official in the whole world, or in Ireland at least, half as good or worthy as he is. I do not know one who has served the Crown or the people to such advantage and benefit; and certainly I think the Government might associate a gentleman like Mr. Brady with a matter of this kind, and trust him to the full.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I am afraid I shall have to go to a division upon this Amendment, because I am so thoroughly convinced that in this particular instance the Chief Secretary has been misled by the stupid information from Dublin. I must say I do not think the right hon. Gentleman advanced any argument which ought to weigh at all against my Amendment. He said it was a dangerous departure from custom and sound principle to intrust the administration of a public fund like this to these local Committees of irresponsible persons. But, Sir, I contend that the case is extremely exceptional, and we have here on record the fact that only a few years ago a fund, five or six times the size of this, was intrusted to a Committee composed almost of the very same men that the present Relief Committee is composed of. The words of the Arrears Act were—

> "This fund shall be administered by Boards of Guardians, or such persons as the Lord Lieutenant shall direct."

In the case of the Arrears Act, the discretionary powers which I seek to give His Excellency in the case of this Act were given by Parliament to the Lord Lieutenant. I have this very evening received a long letter from Mr. Brady, and he plainly intimates in his letter the chances of a famine in Clare Island, and tells me he heartily approves of my suggestion. We must remember that the proposal put forward by the Local Government Board is this—that they should send down special Inspectors to administer the fund. Is that what common sense dictates? Here we have men, officials of the Government, on the spot. Mr. Brady is a salaried official of the English Government, and is doing this work without 1*d.* of expense, and doing it with good heart. He has been on the spot for the last fortnight, and I may say he is personally acquainted with almost every inhabitant of these Islands. In order to meet the requirements of red tape, we are to have him superseded by men sent down from the Local Government Board, about whom we know nothing, and who may be utterly ignorant of the work they are called upon to do. These men are to be paid large salaries for their labour. Men who up to this have done excellent work are to be superseded by men from Dublin, who may be ignorant, stupid, idle, prejudiced against the people, and who may not take that care and trouble which is necessary in order to see that food is given to the people who want it. I cannot see any reason to justify the rejection of my Amendment. The Government and the Treasury have every security in the fact that the whole thing is left to the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant. I have moved this Amendment in view of the exceptional circumstances of these Islands and remote parts of the Coast, which are, practically, not reached except by these self-sacrificing men. In the absence of some satisfactory assurance from the Government in the matter, I must, though reluctantly, go to a division.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I should like to supplement my remarks, after hearing the suggestion of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan). I will gladly undertake, in view of the points which he has put forward, to consider between now and Report whether I could accept the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Dillon), on the understanding that it shall apply exclusively to the Islands.

MR. DILLON: Mr. Courtney, I will very cheerfully withdraw the Amendment.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: The suggestion of my hon. Friend (Mr. Rathbone) does not appear to me to have anything to do with the Amendment before the Committee.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I see that the qualification for a Poor Law Guardian in Belmullet is a £30 valuation. I suppose that in the entire Union there are not 30 people whose valuation reaches £30. As the right hon. Gentleman is Chairman of the Local Government Board, has he any objection to take steps to reduce the qualification from £30 to £10 valuation, at which it stands in other districts of Ireland?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I fear I cannot undertake to make such an Amendment in connection with a Bill of this kind; but I will consider it between now and the Report. At the same time, I must say that it is an extension of the scope of the Bill. There are many reasons why we should not take any money from the Treasury for this purpose; amongst others, it would tend to arrest the flow of private benevolence, which we should all be very sorry to see interfered with.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I trust if the Government accept the Amendment I am about move that the contract will not be given to the Board of Works, because if they get a contract for about £100 they will be sure to spend £2,000.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, after line 18, to insert—(d.) "The Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland may, with the sanction of the Treasury, expend out of the said sum of forty thousand pounds a sum not exceeding ten thousand pounds in the construction of boat-slips and piers, or the execution of any other works of public utility which may, in their judgment, tend to afford permanent employment and prevent the recurrence of public distress, within any of the unions named in the Schedule to this Act."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I propose, on Report, to bring up a clause with the view of carrying out the proposal of the hon. and learned Gentleman. We approve of £40,000 in two moieties—one for the distressed Unions, and the other for the repair and construction of roads and other objects. We propose to establish a small Commission of three Members to deal with the matter.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will provide for the improvement of existing piers, as well as the construction of new ones.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

On Motion of Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.), the following Clause was read a second time and added to the Bill:—

(Relief under this Act not to incapacitate from voting.)

"No person shall be incapacitated from being registered or voting as a Parliamentary elector by reason of his receipt of relief under this Act."

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): I rise to move that the word "Dunfanaghy" be added after "Clifden." The whole of the inhabitants of Gweedore are in a condition of the greatest distress; the whole valuation of the district amounts to £561, and that in itself is an indication of the poverty which exists. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will agree to the insertion of Dunfanaghy in the Schedule.

Amendment proposed, in Schedule, after "Clifden," insert "Dunfanaghy."—(*Mr. O'Hea.*)

Question proposed, "That 'Dunfanaghy' be there inserted."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I have taken a great deal of trouble to ascertain the state of the case about Dunfanaghy Union, and in reference to it I have read an excellent and trustworthy Report. The state of things is, of course, bad enough; but I do not think it is such as would justify our including it in this Schedule. No doubt, Gweedore in the Union is in a state of distress; but I do not think it would be just to other places if we were to include Dunfanaghy.

Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): In the district in which Gweedore is situated there are Islands quite as distressed as the Islands further West and South. The attention of the right hon. Gentleman has evidently been called to the mainland, which includes several electoral districts. I will give a few figures extracted to-day from the Report of the Local Government Board in relation to the whole of that Union, which includes the most distressed district of Donegal. It appears that £410 has been spent on the maintenance of the poor, £736 on medical stores, and £286 on salaries. I assure the right hon. Gentleman that if he depends on any outdoor relief being administered in that district he will be totally mistaken. The Guardians are not elected by the people of the district, because they have not the qualification which enables them to elect Guardians; and unless you deal with the district in the Bill the Guardians will continue the system which has been a disgrace to the district for some time. If the Government will prevent the people of the district in some way from being excluded from the relief given by other Boards of Guardians the Members for Donegal will be satisfied.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: The Bill says that the Guardians shall make provision for outdoor relief not only for the Islands, but for the country around.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I am sorry to appear to be persistent in this matter; but, as one of the Members for Donegal, I should not be doing my duty if I did not urge it upon the right hon. Gentleman. With regard to the whole Union, I would not ask that there should be any steps taken by the Local Government Board to give this relief; but I say that, for the places scheduled with certain restrictions, that relief ought to be given. I have made inquiries as to the condition of the people in the district; I find that they are absolutely without means, that their credit is stopped, and that the amount of their indebtedness is equal to three years' valuation of the whole district on account of meal, potatoes, and other food. It is impossible for the people to be saved from famine next year if they do not get relief. I notice that the scheduled Unions have been exclusively reported on and visited by Mr. Tuke, who, in regard to the districts which he visited, reported to this effect—

> "We have before us the condition of the whole Coast line extending to Mayo and the Coast of Galway, including Belmullet. Of the condition of the people outside those districts I have no certain knowledge; but it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the poverty in those districts is almost as serious, and requiring the most careful and immediate consideration; first of all with regard to seed; and, secondly, for the present emergency some well-devised system of relief should at once be instituted."

I am certain that if Mr. Tuke had extended his investigation beyond Galway, he would have reported that in Gweedore there was destitution as extreme as any he has reported, and with regard to which the Government has thought fit to take exceptional steps. If Dunfanaghy is scheduled it will be open to the Local Government Board to limit relief to the most distressed portions of the district. I do not see of what use it will be to send down Inspectors in order to see that the Boards of Guardians do their duty if the Government omit this Union which is one where, although outdoor relief is most needed, it is not and never has been given.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I move that the Chairman report Progress. I do so as the hour is now so advanced.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Johnston.*)

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I hope, as we are so near the end of this Bill, that the hon. Gentleman will not think it necessary to press his Motion for Progress.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If there is any prospect of getting through the Bill I am willing to withdraw it.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): Dunfanaghy is a crofter district, and I should say that it is about the poorest district in Ireland. The poverty of the district has been brought about by the same causes as have operated in the Highlands. They have lost all their townlands, and they cannot get work; and their present condition is one of awful poverty. In no place have I seen more poverty than in Dunfanaghy Union.

Amendment *negatived.*

Amendment proposed, to add at the end of the Schedule the words "Swineford Union."—(*Mr. John Morley.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): It is a remarkable thing that no hon. Member representing the county has asked that this addition should be made.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It is asked for by the people themselves, and having regard to the small valuation, which amounts to £4,900, and the rating of 5*s.* 8*d.* in the pound, I think it is a very fair claim.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I am exceedingly grateful to the Chief Secretary for Ireland for adding Swineford Union to the Schedule. I know the Union to be a dreadfully poor one; but I have an intense dislike to Unions being put in the Schedule, and that is the reason why I did not ask it in this case; nevertheless, I am very grateful to the right hon. Gentleman.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): The District of Boyle contains a great amount of poverty, and I make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland to consider whether it is not desirable to include Boyle Union in the Schedule?

Schedule, as amended, *agreed to.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

CAPE RACE LIGHTHOUSE BILL.

(*Mr. C. Acland, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Osborne Morgan.*)

[BILL 151.] COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 and 2 *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Amendment of Canadian Act respecting Cape Race Lighthouse).

Mr. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I wish to ask whether this clause has been properly considered with reference to Clause 55 of the Dominion Act of 1857? As I read the clause in the Bill relating to the Legislature of Canada, it will interfere with the relations now established between the Dominion and the Mother Country. If the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill will look at the Act, he will find that the power of vetoing a Bill is left entirely in the hands of the hon. Gentleman acting on instructions from home. We are, therefore, in this Clause 3 entirely overriding Clause 55 of the Dominion Act of 1857. That is a serious thing to do. Another point arises here. In 1856 land at Cape Race was, with the consent of the Legislature of Newfoundland, handed over to England for the purpose of establishing a lighthouse there. Now I do not find that there is any Preamble to the Bill which recites the whole story connected with the Acts in the Bill now before the House. There is no recital of any willingness on the part of Newfoundland that the land should be handed over to the Dominion. You are doing this. Newfoundland consented that a piece of its territory should be handed over to the Mother Country, and the Mother Country is going to hand it over to the Dominion, which has no power in the Island, not having joined in the Federation Act of 1867. First, we are taking the territory away from the Island, not keeping it ourselves, but handing it over to Canada; and, secondly, this very important point arises in reference to the clause under which a veto is absolutely placed upon any legislation brought forward in the Dominion Parliament instead of its being, as it is under the Dominion Act, left to the Governor General to say whether that veto should apply. I think it necessary to make these few observations before we dispose of this measure.

The SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) (Cornwall, Launceston): In the 55th clause of the Act of 1867, to which the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Staveley Hill) refers, the words occur "subject to Her Majesty's instructions." The words of this Bill merely imply that the Queen shall instruct the Governor General of Canada. With reference to the Government of the Colony of Newfoundland, the first two lines on page 2 recite that that Government has declined to undertake the maintenance of the lighthouse; this is an assertion by implication that that Government has been consulted, which is, in fact, the case. That being so, and the Government of Canada being willing to undertake it, and it being no loss to the United Kingdom, no loss to Newfoundland, but a great advantage to Newfoundland and Canada, I think that the hon. Member will admit that a correct course has been taken in this matter.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: Under Clause 55 of the Act, where a Bill passed by the House of Parliament is presented to the Governor General, it is enacted that he shall be able to declare whether it shall be vetoed by him. With regard to the other point, the hon. Gentleman has given no answer at all. My complaint is that you are taking away a piece of land without the consent of the Legislative Body of Newfoundland. It is perfectly right that we should have the land; but we have no right to say that it shall be given to Canada.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I ask when or by what authority property in this land was vested in the Newfoundland authorities? By this Bill it would be vested in the Government of Canada. By consent given in 1856 permission was obtained to occupy the land; but I want to know when the Newfoundland authorities alienated the land to Her Majesty? Her Majesty had the right to erect the lighthouse, which has since been maintained at Cape Race with the consent of the Newfoundland authorities, and this Bill does not divest it from them.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): I do not think my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Staveley Hill) can have read the clause carefully. The clause says that where a Bill passes the Dominion Parliament the Governor General is to act according to his discretion, but subject to Her Majesty's instructions. Well, Sir, how can Her Majesty's instructions be given more solemnly than by Act of Parliament? With regard to the other point, the lighthouse was erected; but I am not aware that it was ever vested in the Government of Newfoundland. I hope the hon. and learned Gentleman will not offer any further opposition to the clause.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: Has the Government of Newfoundland consented to this land being handed over to the Dominion?

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN: Yes.

Clause *agreed to.*

Schedule and Preamble *agreed to.*

Bill *reported,* without Amendment.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) (Cornwall, Launceston): I would ask that the third reading of this Bill may be taken now. The Parliament of Canada is now sitting, and it is necessary that we should pass this Bill as rapidly as possible, in order that it may come before them.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Mr. C. T. D. Acland.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

BANKRUPTCY (OFFICE ACCOMMODATION) ACT (1885) AMENDMENT BILL.

(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

[BILL 161.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The object of this Bill is simply to correct almost a clerical error in the Act to provide office accommodation in connection with the Court of Bankruptcy. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The Bill is not yet printed.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I hold a printed copy of it in my hand.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Well, I cannot get a copy.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

INFANTS BILL.—[Bill 139.]

(*Mr. Attorney General, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Bryce.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to move, Sir, that you leave the Chair. I do not propose to go on with the clauses of the Bill at this hour of the night; but if the House goes into Committee, I will immediately move to report Progress. The Bill in its present state is exactly the same as was passed by the House of Lords last year, and was brought down to this House and read a second time. It is exactly in the form of the previous measure.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday.*

POLICE FORCES ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—[Bill 3.]

(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord Claud Hamilton, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Mr. Joseph Cowen, Sir George Russell.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to move, Sir, that you report Progress, and ask leave to sit again. It is a very late hour, and there are very serious questions involved in this Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday.*

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (DURHAM) BILL.—[Bill 74.]

(*Mr. Theodore Fry, Mr. Walter James, Mr. Dodds, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Gourley, Mr. Paulton.*)

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Mr. Theodore Fry.*)

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): It will be within the recollection of hon. Members that this Bill came on and passed through Committee the other evening very unexpectedly. Most of the Members interested in the Bill were absent, and it was unfortunate that we had no opportunity of moving Amendments. I myself have a very important Amendment upon it, and I beg to move, therefore, that the Bill be re-committed.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "now read the third time," in order to insert the word "re-committed,"—(*Mr. Tomlinson,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): The Bill has been before the House more than once, and there have been several opportunities of discussing it. It was very well received in the locality in regard to which it applies—it has almost the unanimous support of the people of Durham; and, therefore, I hope my hon. Friend will not press his Motion.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I wish to endorse the statement which has just been made by the hon. Member for Kirkcudbright (Mr. Mark Stewart). The Bill is very generally approved in Durham.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

MEDICAL ACT (1858) AMENDMENT BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): At this late hour I will only ask leave to introduce a Bill to amend "The Medical Act, 1858;" and I will only say this—that it is a much simpler Bill than any other that has ever been introduced previously, and that it will be printed shortly.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend 'The Medical Act, 1858.'"—(*Sir Lyon Playfair.*)

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Is this the same Bill which was brought in last year by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella)?

SIR LYON PLAYFAIR: No, Sir; it is a much simpler Bill.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Sir LYON PLAYFAIR, Mr. MUNDELLA, and The LORD ADVOCATE.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 163.]

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I wish to ask some Member of the Government on what day the Government intend to introduce their Coal Mines Regulation Bill?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY) (Nottingham, E.): I hope the Government will be able to inform the hon. Member to-morrow.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE.

Resolved, That whenever the House shall meet at Two of the clock, the Sittings of the House shall be held subject to the Resolutions of the House of the 30th day of April 1869.—(*Mr. Arnold Morley.*)

House adjourned at a quarter before Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 6th April, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) * (59); Cape Race Lighthouse * (60); Prison Officers' Superannuation * (61); Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister * (62); Church Patronage * (63).

Second Reading—Marriages (Hours of Solemnization) (52).

Committee—Idiots * (46-65).

Committee — Report — Compensation for Damages * (50); Army Annual (55).

Report—Lunacy Acts Amendment (53-64).

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 53.) REPORT.

Amendments *reported* (according to order).

Clause 2 (Appointment of Justices to make orders for reception).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, he wished to propose the insertion of words to meet a practical difficulty which it had been pointed out to him might arise. The Bill, as it stood, made provision for the appointment of certain Justices to carry out the law in counties, and also in boroughs having separate Quarter Sessions. There was no similar provision, however, in the cases of boroughs without separate Sessions. His Amendment was to the effect that, in such cases, the Lord Chancellor, upon the facts being represented to him, might nominate the necessary number of Justices to act.

Moved, In page 2, after sub-section (2.) add as new sub-section—

"If in the case of a borough not having a separate quarter sessions representation is made to the Lord Chancellor that public inconvenience is likely to result unless power is given to a justice or justices of such borough to exercise within the same the powers conferred by this Act upon justices of the peace in relation to orders for the reception of lunatics not being paupers, it shall be lawful for the Lord Chancellor from time to time to nominate and appoint, by writing under his hand, one or more of the justices of such borough to exercise within the same the powers aforesaid." — (*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Amendment *agreed to;* words *added* accordingly.

Clause 3 (Orders for reception of private patients to be made by county court judge, magistrate, or justice).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR, in moving an Amendment, with the view of securing, as far as possible, a real consideration of each case by the person to whom the order with regard to the detention was presented, said, that under its provisions, the justice would have to consider, in the first place, whether it was necessary to see the lunatic or not. Under the Bill, as it now stood, there was power to see the lunatic, if he thought it necessary to do so; but he (the Lord Chancellor) desired to place it distinctly before the justice, that he should consider the desirability of seeing the lunatic or not.

Moved, In page 4, line 4, to leave out ("if satisfied with"), and insert ("shall consider.")—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

LORD HALSBURY said, he thought this Amendment was in the wrong direction. It had been decided, and decided rightly, that the system of private lunatic asylums should continue. He believed it was originally required that the initial step to place a man in an asylum should be very carefully watched; and he was certain that the feeling out-of-doors would be shocked at the notion that the person intrusted with the judicial investigation should be advised that it was not necessary he should see the lunatic. The Amendment practically told the Justice that he need not see the lunatic personally before depriving him of his ordinary liberties as an Englishman, unless there was something suspicious in the case. He could not help thinking this was mischievous, because those who had the care of the lunatic would see that there was nothing to excite the suspicion of the magistrate. He had known cases in which a man had been taken into custody by his friends, put into a cab late at night, and driven about in order that a medical man might be found. That medical man might refuse to give a certificate, and another doctor might be found whose poverty and not his will consented. Cases arose which were not sensational or of the kind referred to in novels. There were cases of people who were locked up because they had got certain notions which their friends objected to; but, at the same time, it was the greatest cruelty that they should be locked up. He did not intend to make any imputation on the Medical Profession, and he believed that there were not 5 per cent of the people locked up in asylums who were not properly there. Those who wished to improperly invoke the power of the law, however, would take care that they did nothing to excite suspicion.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he was not inclined to prolong the discussion on this Amendment. In his view, it was not necessary in every case to require the Judge or magistrate to see an alleged patient personally before granting a certificate; but he ought to have the power to do so if not satisfied. In Scotland, he might point out, the Sheriff, who was the officer charged with this duty, was not required in all cases personally to see the patient; but the Scotch law allowed him to exercise his discretion in the matter, and the Scotch law in this respect had worked quite satisfactorily. He was prepared to acquiesce in the Amendment, believing it was intended to call upon the Judge or magistrate to exercise his discretion in every instance expressly on the question whether he ought to see the patient or not.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, he thought the noble and learned Lord (Lord Halsbury) had rather misapprehended the object and effect of the Amendment. He had inserted it in order to make the Bill stronger in the direction desired by the noble and learned Lord by calling on the Judge, magistrate, or justice to consider whether it was necessary for him personally to see the alleged lunatic.

Amendment *agreed to.*

On the Motion of The LORD CHANCELLOR, the following Consequential Amendments made:—In line 5, leave out ("may forthwith make an order thereon; or he may") and insert—

("And whether it is necessary for him personally to see and examine the alleged lunatic; and if he is satisfied that an order may properly be made forthwith, he may make the same accordingly; or if not so satisfied he shall");

in line 8, leave out from ("of which") down to ("notice"), in line 9, and insert—

("And he may make such further or other inquiries of or concerning the alleged lunatic as he may think fit, and for that purpose may summon any person or persons to give evidence, and may take evidence on oath; notice of the time and place appointed for the consideration of the petition");

in line 10, before ("letter") insert ("registered"); and in page 4, line 17, leave out ("a fee of eighteen pence") and insert ("the prescribed fee").

Clause 42 (No new licences to be granted).

LORD HOBHOUSE said, the Amendments which had been already carried with regard to what was now Clause 42 of the Bill had rested upon three principles. One was that the abrupt cessation of private asylums was calculated to injure the inmates of them. The next was that there was a large class of the community who desired to have private asylums for their friends, and the injury to whom would outweigh any public advantage to be gained by the abrupt cessation of those establishments. Thirdly, that there was a class of men who had embarked their fortunes and their lives in undertakings of this kind, and that they might be ruined unless care were taken before their establishments were put an end to. The Amendments which he had placed on the Paper were entirely in accordance with those principles. In fact, they were intended to apply those principles to the specific cases to which they ought to apply, but to which they would not apply if the Bill stood as it was at present drawn. First of all, he took the case of a change of house after the passing of the Bill. He believed that the principle of granting a licence in respect of a particular house was a new principle, and that a grant had hitherto always been a personal affair. If a change of house were for the advantage of the patients, the case would be met by an Amendment which his noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack had placed on the Paper; but he did not see why they should not also consider the case of a change which was made for the benefit of the proprietor of the asylum. He understood that several of these properties were held upon lease; and if the lease expired after the passing of the Bill the freeholder would be able to put a terrible screw on the lessee, who could not continue to conduct his asylum in any other premises. He would move the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Moved, In page 29, line 1 of subsection (2), leave out ("at the passing of this Act.")—(*The Lord Hobhouse.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, his desire was to see a gradual change from private asylums to public asylums. In the first instance, he had limited the power of renewal to the existing licensees in respect of any house. Then it was pointed out to him that there were many cases in which large sums of money had been invested in these houses, which were unsuited for other purposes, and that loss would accrue to individuals if the licence terminated with the life of the existing licensee. Accordingly, desiring to limit the matter in some way, he came to the conclusion to meet those

cases by providing that no licence should be granted in respect of a new house. His noble Friend's Amendment would render the process of conversion less rapid, and he did not think the proposal was necessary in order to meet the cases of vested interests.

Amendment *negatived.*

LORD HOBHOUSE said, he wished to move an Amendment, providing that where a private asylum had been carried on by joint licences, the Lunacy Commissioners should have power to license them individually, so long as the aggregate number of patients allowed was not in excess of those in the joint licence.

Moved, after subsection (2.) insert as new subsection :—

"If there be joint licensees who desire to carry on business apart from one another, and if, in the opinion of the commissioners or the justices, as the case may be, the establishment conducted by them jointly, and also any new establishment which any of them desires to conduct, answers the conditions herein-before required for granting renewed licences, the commissioners or justices, as the case may be, may grant to each of such licensees renewed licences for such number of patients (not exceeding in the aggregate the number allowed by the joint licence) as such joint licensees shall agree upon, or, failing agreement, as the commissioners or justices may consider a proper proportion for each such licensee."—(*The Lord Hobhouse.*)

EARL STANHOPE said, he hoped the Amendment would not be accepted, as it would only lead to a multiplication of new private asylums. If partnership was dissolved in the ownership of these private asylums the usual course would be followed, and money would pass between the parties. The very object of the Bill would be defeated if the noble and learned Lord's Amendment were adopted.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR admitted that there was a good deal to be said for the Amendment; but, unless there was a decided opinion in favour of it, he should not be disposed to accept it, as he had always wished to see the number of private asylums gradually diminished rather than increased.

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause 67 (Abuse of female lunatic).

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN moved to amend the clause by providing that any keeper who should have carnal knowledge of any female patient under his charge should be guilty of felony, and be liable to penal servitude for life as a maximum punishment.

Moved, In page 38, line 35, after ("patient") insert ("he shall be guilty of felony, and shall be liable, at the discretion of the court, to be kept in penal servitude for life or for any period not less than five years, or to be imprisoned for any period not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour; and if any such person shall attempt to have carnal knowledge, or be guilty of any indecent assault or other indecent behaviour upon or towards any such female patient.")—(*The Earl of Milltown.*)

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, he thought that the offence in question was punished with sufficient severity already. Some injustice might be done by the proposal, as patients differed very much, many being practically sane, except that they had delusions on particular subjects.

Amendment *negatived.*

Bill to be read 3ª on *Friday* next; and to be *printed* as amended. (No. 64.)

MARRIAGES (HOURS OF SOLEMNIZATION) BILL.—(No. 52.)

(*The Lord Monk-Bretton.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord MONK-BRETTON, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, the Bill had already passed through the other House of Parliament. It was to extend the hours during which marriages might be solemnized from 12 at noon until 3 o'clock p.m. The measure was desired by the working classes, because it would enable them to celebrate their marriages during a half-holiday. He believed that the change would also be agreeable to other classes, because it would enable marriages to be celebrated by social gatherings at hours consonant with modern life.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Monk-Bretton.*)

The Earl of SELBORNE said, that the proposed alteration in the law would entail additional duties upon the Registrars, from one of whom he had received a communication on the subject. That gentleman stated that the Registrars had received no remuneration for attending marriages solemnized in licensed places, and that such marriages were likely to become much more frequent, if this Bill passed. He was afraid, however, that it would be beyond the province of this House to determine that the remuneration of those officials should be increased.

Lord HALSBURY pointed out that clergymen would, under the canon law, still be subject to penalties for celebrating marriages after 1 o'clock.

The Earl of MILLTOWN said, he could not understand why the provisions of the Bill did not extend to Ireland, where at present the Marriage Laws were practically similar to those of England.

Lord MONK-BRETTON, in reply, said, that the Bill had not been extended to Ireland, because in that country there was no limit to the hours within which Roman Catholic marriages might be celebrated, while as regards other marriages the limit of time was longer than in England. As to the point raised by the noble and learned Lord opposite, he would promise that it should be looked into and carefully considered.

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Friday* next.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

(*The Lord Sandhurst.*)

(No. 55.) COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee read.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee on the said Bill."—(*The Lord Sandhurst.*)

Viscount BURY said, that he would take this opportunity of asking a Question with regard to the Volunteers, as it was practically one of the only occasions on which one could ask a question of this kind. The other day, after the debate in the other House, he understood that the Secretary of State for War had announced that he was engaged in making inquiries into the state of the Volunteers to decide whether their condition was such as to demand any increase in the Capitation Grant. He hoped that the noble Lord opposite would tell them the nature and scope of those inquiries. If it was true that he was only going to inquire into the subjects which had been brought before the Committee over which he had had the honour to preside, then he thought that the information desired existed in the Office at the present moment in a form ready for immediate use. If, on the other hand, the Secretary of State was going to extend the scope of his inquiry to collateral subjects, he himself, for one, would hear it with great satisfaction. The Committee of 1879 had been somewhat fettered in its investigations owing to the fact that many items now considered legitimate articles of expenditure were then outside the inquiry; and what they had had to define was whether, taking into account all the expenditure that was considered legitimate, the Capitation Grant was sufficient for the purpose. He hoped that the noble Lord would give them some information as to the scope of the proposed inquiry.

LORD SANDHURST said, he thought that it would be wiser if he asked the noble Viscount to repeat his Question on another occasion, as he should not like to give an answer that was not carefully considered.

Motion *agreed to:* House in Committee.

Bill *reported,* without amendment; and to be read 3ª on *Thursday* next.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to alter and amend the law as to marriage with a deceased wife's sister—Was *presented* by The Duke of Saint Albans; read 1ª. (No. 62.)

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the law of church patronage—Was *presented* by The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; read 1ª. (No. 63.)

House adjourned at a quarter past Six o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 6*th April,* 1886.

The House met at Two of the clock.

MINUTES.]—PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*) — *Considered as amended* — London, Chatham, and Dover Railway.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered—First Reading*—Commons Regulation Provisional Order (Stoke) * [164]; Commons Regulation Provisional Order (Hayling) * [165]; Commons Regulation and Inclosure Provisional Order (Totternhoe) * [166].

Committee—Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) [118] [*Fourth Night*]—R.P.

MOTIONS.

COMMONS REGULATION (STOKE) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm the Provisional Order for the regulation of Stoke Common, situated in the parishes of Stoke, Wyken, and Saint Michael, Coventry, in the county of Warwick, in pursuance of a Report of the Land Commissioners for England, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 164.]

COMMONS REGULATION (HAYLING) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm the Provisional Order for the regulation of Hayling Beach Common, situated in the parish of Hayling South, in the County of Southampton, in pursuance of a Report of the Land Commissioners for England, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 165.]

COMMONS REGULATION AND INCLOSURE (TOTTERNHOE) PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm the Provisional Order for the regulation of the Commons, and the Provisional Order for the inclosure of the Common Fields, situated in the parish of Totternhoe, in the county of Bedford, in pursuance of a Report of the Land Commissioners for England, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 166.]

QUESTIONS.

IRELAND—GOVERNMENT LOANS FOR IRISH PURPOSES, 1840-1886.

MR. ALBERT GREY (Northumberland, Tyneside) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he can inform the House what is the amount of the loans guaranteed or advances by the Government, for Irish purposes, since the year 1840 to the present time; what amount has been paid off; what amount has been remitted; and, what is the total amount still outstanding?

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, with regard to the Question of the honourable Member for the Tyneside Division, Whether he will distinguish between the amounts lent and the remissions granted to owners of land and occupiers of land respectively, as well as the amounts due and outstanding from owners and occupiers of land respectively; and, whether the amounts of loans and of remissions due to the occurrence of the famine of 1846 to 1849, and the distress of 1879 to 1881, will be separately shown?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): It will be convenient to divide the loans advanced for Irish purposes since 1840 into those guaranteed and those which have been directly advanced. The only loans guaranteed are those raised for the purposes of the Irish Church Act, 1869, and other Acts relating to the Irish Church surplus. The total of these loans was £12,276,362, of which there has been paid off £4,673,318, leaving outstanding £7,603,044, nothing having been remitted on account of these loans. There is also charged on the Irish Church Fund £1,300,000 for Teachers' Superannuation Fund, and also an annual charge of £20,000 for the Royal University. Of loans actually advanced by the Government the total is £33,668,127; there has been paid off £17,693,820, and remitted £9,140,002, leaving a balance of £6,834,305. The loans due to the famine of 1846 to 1849 amounted to £8,166,230, of which £7,029,304 was remitted. The loans due to the distress of 1879 to 1881 amounted to £1,267,307, of which £19,069 was remitted. If these sums of £7,029,304 and £19,069 be deducted from the £9,140,002, it leaves only £2,091,629 as remitted in respect of loans other than those for the famine and distress. The loans to owners of land amounted to £7,500,961, of which there has been remitted £1,207,737, and there is now outstanding £2,932,539. The loans to occupiers of land amounted to £1,379,943, of which nothing has been remitted, and there is now outstanding £870,410.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I would ask the hon. Gentleman why he has not included the remission of the tithe loan made to the parsons by the Act of four years ago; and is it not the fact that the partial extinction of the famine loan was accounted for by the bargain made by the Government of 1884 with the then Irish Members to allow Ireland only to be taxed for matters which, by the Act of Union, they had been exempted from?

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER said, that the tithe loan, though recently extinguished, had been made prior to 1840, the period mentioned in the hon. Member's (Mr. A. Grey's) Question; and as to the famine loan, he could not answer the inquiry.

TRADE AND COMMERCE—THE MINERAL RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, considering the industrial importance of developing the mineral resources of the three Kingdoms, he is prepared to place a moderate annual sum in the Estimates for the purpose of carrying out systematic explorations and borings in those parts of the Country, more especially where geologists consider it possible that improved stores of coal and other minerals may exist; and, whether he would also recommend that a small royalty should be charged on any minerals so proved, to repay the Nation for such outlays from time to time?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.) (who replied) said: The Chancellor of the Exchequer desires me to state that he cannot hold out any hope to the hon. Member that his proposal will be carried into effect by the Government.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CATHOLIC JURORS (MONAGHAN QUARTER SESSIONS).

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is the practice at Monaghan Quarter Sessions for the sessional Crown prosecutor to challenge all Catholic jurors in party cases; and, if it is intended to follow this course at the trial of the prisoners on the 9th April for assaults arising out of the late election, will Catholic jurors be spared the necessity of answering the summonses?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Sessional Crown Solicitor assures us that it has never been his practice to challenge juries on account of their religion. He further assures us that he has no sort of intention of doing so at the coming trials.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentleman ask the Crown Solicitor how it is that in Monaghan, where three-fourths of the people are Catholic, out of 48 names on the panel now prepared only nine are those of Catholics, and how he can explain that?

[No reply.]

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I will give Notice of the Question.

COMMISSIONERS OF WOODS AND WORKS—THE FOREST OF DEAN.

Mr. T. BLAKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Government intend to introduce a Bill dealing with the Deep Gale Coal Measures in Her Majesty's Forest of Dean; or whether they are prepared to proceed with the Royal Commission which was proposed to be granted in 1884, or to ascertain by other means in what way, and to what extent, the present laws, rules, and regulations affecting the opening and working of mines in the Forest of Dean, and customary tenure and mining rights existing therein, hinder the development of mines, and to suggest the means of removing such grievances as are found to exist?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The difficulties which hinder the development of the Deep Gales in the Forest of Dean are so well understood that Her Majesty's Government does not think that a Royal Commission is required to investigate them; but it is proposed to re-introduce the Bill dealing with the subject as soon as it is ascertained that the opposition of the Free Miners is withdrawn; but I should be glad if the hon. Member would personally discuss the matter either in London or in the Forest of Dean with Mr. Culley, one of the Commissioners of Woods, and Mr. Forster Brown, the deputy Gaveller.

LIGHTHOUSE ILLUMINANTS—THE EXPERIMENTS AT SOUTH FORELAND.

Sir JAMES CORRY (Armagh, Mid) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If he will lay upon the Table of the House an account of the expenditure incurred by the Trinity House in carrying out the experiments on lighthouse illuminants at South Foreland; and, whether he will inform the House from what funds that expenditure was defrayed; and, if out of the Mercantile Marine Fund, whether the cost will not have to be borne solely by the shipping community?

The SECRETARY (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) (Cornwall, Launceston) (who replied) said: The expenditure incurred in and about the experiments in question will amount to about £9,000. It is defrayed out of the Mercantile Marine Fund, which is a fund arising from charges on shipping. The grounds for this expense are, that it will, we hope, lead not only to increased efficiency, but to economy in the management of the lights.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—ALLEGED INTIMIDATION OF VOTERS AT KILVINE, CLAREMORRIS UNION.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, at the recent election for Poor Law Guardian, in the Kilvine Division, Claremorris Union, a man named Godfrey, who is process server and sheriff's bailiff for the district, and land bailiff on two estates in the Division, went round and threatened the voters on these estates that he would have them evicted, or put to costs, if they did not vote against the Nationalist, Mr. O'Connor; whether Godfrey went, at five o'clock in the morning, to the houses of the tenants on Mr. Rutledge's estate, and threatened those who had voted for Mr. O'Connor that if they did not give up their papers to be spoiled he would make them regret it; and, whether he will order an inquiry into these charges, with a view to a prosecution?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, he had received a Report from the Constabulary on this matter, from which it appeared that though there was very little evidence of Godfrey having threatened the voters, it was alleged that in some cases he demanded the voting papers. He (Mr. Morley) would ask the Local Government Board what action was proper to be taken under these circumstances.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON ACCIDENTS IN MINES—SPECIMENS OF MINERS' SAFETY LAMPS.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the desirability of preserving for the use of the public and for those interested in mining, the large and valuable collection of miners' safety lamps which have been sent by inventors to the Royal Commission on Accidents in Mines; and, whether the Home Office can arrange to have these lamps kept together and put in some accessible position in the Geological Museum in Jermyn Street?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.), in reply, said, he hoped to be able to comply with his hon. Friend's request, and would communicate with him on the subject.

CUSTOMS' DEPARTMENT — OUTDOOR EXAMINING OFFICERS.

Captain COTTON (Cheshire, Wirrall) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is true that one hundred appointments are being made to the post of Assistant Examining Officer in the Out-door Customs' Department; and, if such be the case, whether those who for some years past have served as Acting Examining Officers will be confirmed in that rank, or, failing such confirmation, will they be allowed, if of satisfactory character and capacity, to receive appointments amongst the new assistants without passing the prescribed competitive examination?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): Provision has been made in the Estimates for 1886-87 for 100 Assistant Examining Officers, it being calculated that the sum so provided will cover the pay of the number of officers of that grade likely to be appointed in the period. Appointments to the grade of Assistant Examining Officer will be made from the ranks of out-door officers and boatmen by selection only, and not by competition. All the Assistant Examining Officers hitherto appointed have been selected from among the Acting Examining Officers, to whom preference will generally be given in constituting the new class.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—VENTILATION OF THIS HOUSE.

Mr. DUNCOMBE (York, E. R., Howdenshire) asked the honourable Member for North-West Staffordshire, Whether he would empower some competent sanitary engineer to investigate the causes of, and, if possible, provide some effectual remedy for, the disagreeable odours that constantly prevail in the House and Lobbies?

A LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. Leveson Gower) (Stafford, N.W.), in reply, said, a Committee was now engaged in investigating all the matters connected with the ventilation of the House, and it was expedient to await their Report before taking any steps.

Mr. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleshall) asked whether a very full Report was not made for the information of the House last year by an official of the Board of Trade; and, if so, what had become of that Report?

Mr. LEVESON GOWER said, he understood that Report was now before the Committee, and it would guide them in their deliberations.

Mr. DUNCOMBE asked when the Committee's Report might be expected?

Mr. LEVESON GOWER said, the Committee had only just commenced their sittings, and he could not say when the Report might be expected.

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—KEW GARDENS—INCREASED SEATING ARRANGEMENTS.

Mr. HOWARD SPENSLEY (Finsbury, Central) asked the honourable Member for North-West Staffordshire, Whether the First Commissioner of Woods and Forests would cause increased seats to be supplied in Kew Gardens and on its river frontage, in view of the coming season?

A LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. Leveson Gower) (Stafford, N.W.), in reply, said, the First Commissioner of Works had already given instructions for seats, which would be placed in the position indicated in the hon. Member's Question.

TRADE MARKS—LEGISLATION.

Mr. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleshall) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill to prevent the false marking of manufactured articles, and to provide a more summary procedure in cases of false marking than is afforded by the Merchandise Marks Act of 1862; and, if so, at what date the Government propose to bring forward such a measure?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND) (Cornwall, Launceston), who replied, said: The President has taken in hand the whole question of Trade Marks, and a Bill is in course of preparation to amend the Merchandise Marks Act of 1862, and will probably be introduced before Easter. The International question is also being dealt with.

MR. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said, that in consequence of the hon. Gentleman's answer he would postpone his own Bill on the subject until he knew what the proposals of the Government were.

ADMIRALTY—EDUCATION OF NAVAL EXECUTIVE OFFICERS.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If he will consent to lay upon the Table of the House the Report of the Admiralty Committee presided over by Admiral Luard, C.B., on the Education of Naval Executive Officers, with the evidence of the witnesses examined?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): The Official Report of the Committee on the Education of Naval Executive Officers has not yet been received; and I am therefore unable to express an opinion as to whether it will be considered desirable to lay a copy upon the Table.

SOUTH AFRICA—AFFAIRS OF ZULULAND.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, When it will be possible for him to lay upon the Table further Papers on the affairs of Zululand; and, whether, among those Papers, he will include any instructions that have been sent to Sir Arthur Havelock, the Governor of Natal, with a view to opening up negotiations for the settlement of the Zulu question?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): Further Papers on the affairs of Zululand are in course of being printed, and will be laid upon the Table as soon as possible. They will include, among other things, the Instructions sent to Sir Arthur Havelock with a view to opening up negotiations for the settlement of the Zulu Question; but as the despatch containing these Instructions has not yet reached him, it would obviously be premature to present these Papers to Parliament in an incomplete shape before he has had time to answer and act upon it.

NAVY — H.M.SS. "IMPERIEUSE" AND "WARSPITE."

SIR JOHN COMMERELL (Southampton) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If their Lordships will take into consideration the advisability of appointing a Committee of Naval Experts to report how far it is prudent to heavily square-rig the *Impérieuse* and *Warspite*, these vessels being propelled by double screws, and especially liable to accidents in action, from the fall of spars and rigging, and how far the use of masts and yards is advantageous; and, whether their weight might be more beneficially utilised in increasing the coal supply?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): It is not considered necessary to appoint a Committee to inquire into the question of the rig of the *Impérieuse* and *Warspite;* but I may add that the subject is at present under the consideration of the Board of Admiralty.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—BOGUS OUTRAGE AT CASTLECAULFIELD, CO. TYRONE—CASE OF ROBERT CUDDY, JUNIOR.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he has made inquiry into the alleged moonlighting in Tyrone; if he is aware that Robert Cuddy, junior, was a boy of fourteen, and not an Orangeman; and, if the whole affair was anything more than a boy's frolic, the first person visited being the boy's own grandfather?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): According to my information, Robert Cuddy, junior, is much older than he is represented to be in this Question. I do not know whether he is an Orangeman or not. The point is not material. The affair is not looked upon as a frolic, and instructions have been given that Cuddy shall be prosecuted.

LOCAL BANKRUPTCY COURTS, IRELAND.

Mr. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether, if a Bill dealing with the Local Bankruptcy Court for Belfast and for Cork were brought into the House, would the Government give facilities to enable the Bill to become Law this Session?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Charles Russell) (Hackney, S.), in reply, said, that this was not a Question relating to anything with which he had any connection whatever. His right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary told him the Question was practically the same as one answered by him the other day; and he could only repeat that answer—namely, that while the Government had no objection to the Bill, but rather approved of it, they could not give any facilities in the sense of giving up Government time for its discussion.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

Sir CHARLES FORSTER (Walsall) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether the managers and teachers of schools have the right of refusing any child of school age admission when that child has attended that school for years and complied with the usual conditions; and, whether his attention has been called to certain irregularities which have taken place recently at the Church School in Blakenhall; and, if so, whether he can state what were the irregularities complained of?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): Managers and teachers of schools have no right of refusing any child of school age admission to a school, provided that there is room for the child in it. The only alleged irregularities of which I have official knowledge are as to children being kept in school beyond school hours, a practice which is discouraged by the Department. From the case shown to me by the hon. Baronet, there seems to have been an assault on the schoolmistress by a relative of children so kept in; but upon this there has been a judicial decision.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE OATHS BILL.

Mr. Serjeant SIMON (Dewsbury) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will afford facilities for proceeding with the Oaths Bill, seeing that it was second on the paper on Tuesday the 23rd March, and would have been reached but that a Bill, the Irish Land (Labourers) Bill, was unexpectedly taken?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.) (who replied) said: The Prime Minister desires me to state that in the present state of Business he can hold out no hope that he will be able to afford facilities for proceeding with the Oaths Bill.

THE IRISH CHURCH FUND.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said he desired to put a Question, of which he had been unable to give Notice, to the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, considering the many burdens on the Irish Church Fund and the depreciation of the value of Irish land, he still believed that there was a surplus of the Irish Church Fund out of which a grant could be made under the Poor Law Relief (Ireland) Bill, and——[*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Question is one of which Notice must be given.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 118.] COMMITTEE.

[*Progress 5th April.*]

[FOURTH NIGHT.]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 12 (Intimation to landlords).

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): My first Amendment is to omit the words "pasture or grazing," in line 16. The clause will provide that the Land Commission, upon receiving an application by crofters for enlargement of holding, shall intimate the same to the landlord who has refused to let available pasture land for that purpose. I propose to leave out "pasture or grazing," so that the section will apply to a refusal on the part of the landlord to let any available land for the enlargement of holdings.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 16, to leave out the words "pasture or grazing."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I also propose to make a similar alteration in line 22 by omitting the words "pasture or grazing."

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 22, to leave out the words "pasture or grazing."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Ross-shire (Dr. Macdonald), to leave out the sub-section and insert—

"In order to enable the Land Commissioners to make advances for the stocking of holdings, building of houses, and other expenses incidental to the enlargement of holdings under this Act, it shall be lawful for the Public Works Loan Commissioners, from time to time, to advance to the Land Commission, out of any moneys which may be placed at the disposal of the Commissioners by Parliament for the making of loans, such sums as may be approved by the Treasury.

"The amount of such loans shall not exceed five years' rent of the entire holdings (including any additions made to them by the court, or with the consent of the landlord or landlords), such sum or sums to be secured on the parochial assessments, and to be repayable in such half-yearly instalments as will repay the whole, with interest at three and a-half per centum per annum, in twenty-five years.

"It shall also be lawful, under this section, to grant loans to fishermen to enable them to get boats and nets, and other appliances for prosecuting their industry, as well as for the building of harbours, under such terms and conditions as the court may think fit."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (MR. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I must point out that the adoption of this Amendment will convert the clause into a Money Clause.

THE CHAIRMAN: Under those circumstances, it is not competent for the hon. Member to move it.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH: Then I will move the next Amendment which stands in the name of my hon. Friend, to insert in line 23, after "crofters," the words "or the forming of new holdings." The effect of the Amendment is to provide that the Commission shall be satisfied that there is land available for enlarging the holdings of the crofters or for forming new holdings.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 23, after the word "crofters," to insert the words "or the forming of new holdings."—(*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I am afraid that I cannot accept the Amendment, seeing that it deals with a subject which is entirely beyond the scope of the Bill.

Amendment *negatived.*

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I have to move the omission of the last part of the second sub-section. The sub-section runs—

"(2.) That the applicants are willing and able to pay a fair rent therefor, and that in the event of an order for the letting therefor being made, the applicants are unable properly to stock the same."

I propose to omit all the words after the first "therefor," which apply to the ability of the applicants to stock the land properly. I move the Amendment as briefly as possible. The sub-section is based on the principle that the applicants are willing to pay a fair rent for the land allotted for the purpose of enlarging the holdings; and then the section proceeds to lay down as a condition of the enlargement that the applicants shall be able to stock it properly. I maintain that that is a question for the consideration of the tenant, and the tenant only. All that the landlord has to consider is that the tenant is in a position to pay him a fair rent. I therefore beg to move the omission of the words of the sub-section after the word "therefor."

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 27, to leave out from the word "therefor," to the word "same," in line 29.—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (MR. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): It appears to me that the clause as it stands is not only consistent with common sense, but in accordance with the direct recommendation of the Royal Commission, which provides that the crofter applying for an enlargement of his holding should be in a position to stock the land. I can see no just reason for objecting to this provision. I do not suppose that any crofter would desire to have an enlargement of his holding unless he was in a position to stock it properly. Surely that is precisely one of the things upon which a stipulation should be clearly laid down. It is the only way by which there would be some reasonable security that the object for which the enlargement was made was properly carried out—namely, that the tenant is in a position to do justice to the enlarged holding. I therefore cannot accept the Amendment.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has already struck out the cottars from the benefit of the provisions of the Bill. In the next place, he struck out the leaseholders; and, now that the benefits can apply only to the crofters, he appears to be desirous to reduce them to as small dimensions as possible. In point of fact, the Lord Advocate is endeavouring to exclude from the benefit of the Bill so many of the parties whom he ought to benefit, that if he goes on there will be nobody left to enjoy the advantages of the measure.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I certainly cannot admit the force of the argument of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate. I presume that these men would have the right of stocking it with game as much larger landowners do. Suppose, for instance, a crofter chose to stock his holding with rabbits for his own amusement; he would have just as much a right as the larger proprietor has to stock his land with deer for his own amusement. I have heard no argument whatever from the right hon. and learned Gentleman except that of unnecessary interference with the provisions of the Bill as they now stand. My contention is that the only thing the landlord has a right to consider is whether, when the land is taken, the tenant who takes it will be able to pay the rent. That is all he has to do with the matter. I shall certainly insist upon this Amendment, and I am afraid that I must put the Committee to the trouble of dividing upon it.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 137; Noes 77: Majority 60.—(Div. List, No. 64.)

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): The next Amendment I have to move is a necessary sequel to the Amendments already adopted, by which "pasture or grazing land" has been struck out of the clause. It provides that the applicant shall not only be willing and able to pay a fair rent, but that he shall, in addition to being able to stock the enlarged holding properly, be also able to cultivate the same in so far as it consists of arable land.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 28, after the word "to," to insert the words "cultivate the same in so far as it consists of arable land, and properly to."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: The next Amendment is to the same effect—namely, to insert at the end of the subsection the words "in so far as it consists of pasture land."

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 29, after the word "same," to insert the words "in so far as it consists of pasture land."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute) moved, in line 33, after "duration," to insert "not exceeding fifteen years." The hon. and learned Member said: This provision clearly points to the duty of letting, by lease, for a fair rent, and otherwise, upon such terms and conditions as the Land Commission may consider just. I have some difficulty in reconciling the provisions contained in the clause with what is to be found in Clause 14, which relates to assigned land, and which provides that—

> "Land assigned by the Land Commission under the authority of this Act, shall be deemed to be part of the holding, or holdings to which it is assigned, and shall be subject to the provisions of this Act relative to crofters' holdings."

The Committee will observe that the effect of the last provision will be to give fixity of tenure on the added part of the holding, and that it is not quite consistent with the provision I am now criticizing. I do not, at present, say whether there ought to be a lease added on to the tenure, or whether the whole land should be let upon the principle of fixity of tenure; but I consider that the question is one which is well worthy of discussion, I hope my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate will be in a position to clear up the matter; because I think it is well that the Committee should be able to determine, first, whether the land is to be held upon a duration which may be long or short. If that is to be the tenure, then the Committee will have to consider what length of lease will be appropriate. I have, in my Amendment, put down 15 years as the duration of the lease; but that is merely a tentative proposal, in order to raise a question which, I think the Committee will agree with me, is well worthy of being distinctly considered. There are two points which require to be kept in view; the one is, that it is not desirable that there should be incessant chopping and changing as to tenure; but, on the other hand, it may be undesirable that portions of the ground, which may or may not turn out to be useful to the new cultivators, or the new sheep farmers, or profitable to them, should be dedicated to such purposes for an indefinite period. I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of having a term, at the end of which it shall be open for consideration whether the provisions of this clause have succeeded or not. In the meantime, I do not propose to go further than place this alternative view before the Committee; and I invite my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate to say what position the Government intend to take in the matter.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 33, after the word "duration," to insert the words, "not exceeding fifteen years. —(*Mr. J. P. B. Robertson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I think the best course would be to leave out the words "as to duration and otherwise." I would ask to be allowed to move the omission of those words which come in before the Amendment of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite.

The CHAIRMAN: The Amendment now before the Committee must be withdrawn before the Amendment of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) can be proposed. If the hon. and learned Member for Buteshire (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) chooses to withdraw his Amendment it can be put.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I think I have already placed before the Committee sufficient grounds on which to elect between a lease and fixity of tenure; and, therefore, I do not think it is necessary that I should withdraw the Amendment.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): I am rather inclined to accept the proposed Amendment of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), which, I think, would be the best way of dealing with the matter. My hon. Friend proposes to leave out the words "as to duration and otherwise." The condition of the crofter is this—that his tenure would not be for any specified term; but he would have a right to continue in the occupation of the holding as long as he did not commit any breach of the statutory conditions. This clause proposes to enlarge the crofters' holding, and it is expedient that the portion added should be held by the crofter on the same tenure as the croft to which it is added. Therefore, if the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend were inserted, the result would be that the Commission would be invited to give the crofter a tenure of any additional land he might occupy for a specified term; whereas he would not have a tenure of the original croft for any specified term, but only on the condition of not committing any breach of the statutory conditions. This the Government cannot agree to. It would be more expedient to leave out the words "as to duration or otherwise" altogether, and simply leave it to the Commission to enlarge the holding—the addition being held by the crofter under the Act on precisely the same footing as the original croft to which the enlargement has been added. Section 14, as has been pointed out, would have that effect; because it declares that—

> "Land assigned by the Land Commission under the authority of this Act, shall be deemed to be part of the holding or holdings to which it is assigned, and shall be subject to the provisions of this Act relative to crofters' holdings."

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): The last sentence of the hon. and learned Gentleman seems to make the matter clear, or I am afraid that otherwise it would not have been satisfactory, seeing that it would have left a discretionary power with the Land Commission as to the terms of the assignment.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I have accomplished my object in bringing the matter to a clear point, and I am bound to say that I think the most logical system is that which the Government have now adopted. I do not profess any great attachment to the system; but, at the same time, having heard what my hon. and learned Friend proposes to do, I am prepared to withdraw my Amendment, and to allow that of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) to be put to the Committee. I must say that my hon. and learned Friend might have admitted this—that any criticism he may have made as to dovetailing the one system into the other applies as much to the proposal of the Government as to mine. But in order that the more methodical and coherent system may be followed I beg to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I have now to propose the omission of the words "as to duration and otherwise."

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 33, to leave out the words "as to duration and otherwise."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): The next Amendment is in line 38, to leave out the words "or grazing."

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 38, to leave out the words "or grazing."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: In the next line I propose to insert, after the word "crofters," the words—

"Or for conferring upon the applicants rights of pasturage common as among themselves over available land specified in the order."

Amendment proposed,

In page 5, line 39, after the word "crofters," to insert the words "or for conferring upon the applicants rights of pasturage common as among themselves over available land specified in the order."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): The Amendment which I have now to propose deals with one of the minor subjects of complaint which came before the Royal Commission on the Highlands and Islands. No doubt the question of dealing with sea ware for the use of the holding is a small one compared with many of the questions affecting the crofter. It is limited in area to the seaboard around the coast; but as that seaboard is very extensive it affects a very numerous class of crofters. In looking at the draft of the Bill I find that there is no mention in it of sea ware, which is an important element in determining the value of a croft where it can be easily gathered and applied to the land. Thus, when the Land Commission comes to deal with the question of fixing fair rents I am afraid, as there is onmention of sea ware, that rents may be determined independently of it. In that case the proprietor, having had the rent fixed, would have it in his power to demand an extra rent for the privilege of gathering seaweed, which in many cases, especially in Orkney, Shetland, and on the Northern coastline, is the life of crofter holdings. It is, therefore, absolutely essential that the matter should be dealt with in the Bill. Some evidence was adduced upon it before the Royal Commission, and the Commissioners were of opinion that the matter should be dealt with definitely, seeing the effect it would have upon the husbandry of the crofters, and that it should be finally determined by the townships holdings having the right to cut and gather seaweed for the purpose of putting it upon the land. I am not desirous of pressing the particular wording of the Amendment which I have placed upon the Paper; I rather prefer the wording of that which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Ross-shire (Dr. R. Macdonald), and I am quite willing to withdraw mine in favour of that of the hon. Member. All I desire is that the Lord Advocate should kindly help the Committee to insert a properly worded provision in the Bill, instructing the Land Commission to deal with this question. The Commission already possesses very wide powers indeed. It has beenreferred to as a Roving Commission, not only dealing with the question of rent, but with the circumstances of the district and of the holdings. Now, I think that all matters connected with sea ware, with the cutting and carrying away of the turf, and also with the thatching of the crofters houses should be included among the circumstances of the case which the Land Commission should have it in their power to deal with, and that those questions should be considered in finally determining the rent of a particular holding. I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed,

In page 5, line 39, after the word "crofters," to insert the words "and where the holding is contiguous to the sea shore, to cut and gather sea ware for the use of the holding."—(*Mr. Lyell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I entirely agree with my hon. Friend that it is desirable to settle this matter at the same time we are settling other questions. There can be no doubt that the use of sea ware, in many places, is absolutely essential to the cultivation of the croft, because it is the only natural and available manure. There have been cases in which a good deal of irritation and mutual misunderstanding have arisen with regard to this matter. But it appears to me that the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Ross-shire (Dr. R. Macdonald), if we take the first part of the second Amendment with a slight verbal alteration, would meet the case better than the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Orkney (Mr. Lyell). The Amendment I refer to declares that—

> "It shall be competent for the Land Commission to draw up a scheme regulating the use of seaweed, peat bogs, and heather or grass used for thatching purposes, the charges for all these being included in the rent."

When we reach that Amendment I would suggest to my hon. Friend that he should withdraw the words "the charges for all these being included in the rent," in order to add the words "and to include the charge for all these in a fixed rent." The reason why I think it desirable that the Land Commission should draw up a scheme is this—sometimes there is a good deal of difference, and almost open quarrelling, among the crofters themselves in regard to the sea ware. There is a considerable amount of competition for it, and ill-feeling is constantly arising over it. It is, therefore, desirable that a scheme should be drawn up by the Land Commission, suitable for certain places, in which shall be laid down the rights of those who are entitled to be supplied. I entirely sympathize with the general object of the Amendment; but, perhaps, under the circumstances, my hon. Friend will withdraw it, and allow the discussion to be taken upon the Amendment of the hon. Member for Ross-shire (Dr. R. Macdonald).

Mr. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): Does the Lord Advocate propose to confer on crofters whose holdings are inland, and which are not on the seashore, or adjacent to the seashore, the right of obtaining this sea ware quite irrespective of their geographical position? Will crofters have a right to come from a great distance to the seashore in order to lift the seaweed? because, if that is so, I am afraid we shall be depriving the proprietor of that which, in many instances, brings him a considerable revenue. I believe it is a fact that seaweed, in consequence of the high price at which it stood not many years ago, brought more to the proprietor than the value of the land, and many persons were employed by owners of land in the preparation of kelp for the market. Not only was the landlord able to pay to these persons a considerable amount of remuneration, but after the payment of all expenses he himself derived a considerable revenue from the utilization of the seaweed. I wish to know if the Committee are to understand that the Government are contemplating the desirability of taking from the landlords this source of revenue and giving it to those who never enjoyed any right of ownership?

Sir HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton): Surely I do not understand the hon. Member for Falkirk (Mr. Ramsay) to lay any claim on the part of the landlords to a property in seaweed? I speak under the correction of the Legal Authorities; but, as I understand the law of Scotland, there is no property at all in seaweed. The whole difficulty—and I have been taught it by experience—is one of access; and if the Lord Advocate proposes to deal with the question, I suppose it will be in the direction of giving access to the foreshore.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour (Clackmannan &c.): I think the Committee ought to be made aware of the exact manner in which the law stands. According to the law of Scotland, where a landlord has an express grant of sea ware, or, without such an express grant, has exercised an exclusive enjoyment of it for 40 years, the property in it is his. Sometimes it is said that there is a distinction between the growing ware and the drift ware; but, however that may be, it is highly expedient that in places where it is the natural and necessary manure of the land, provision should be made for its collection by the tenants. At the same time, I think we might venture to take a few words from the Amendment of the hon. Member for Orkney (Mr. Lyell) and introduce them into the Amendment of the hon. Member for Ross-shire (Dr. McDonald). When we come to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Ross-shire, I think it will be necessary to insert words to meet the case of the landlord who now possesses the absolute right in the sea ware.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): The question of seaweed is one which is constantly arising on the West Coast of Ireland and in other parts of Ireland, and certainly the law is not identical with that which appears to exist in Scotland, because it is the same in regard to floating seaweed as to growing seaweed. The Islands around which it is collected certainly belong to somebody; and if they belong to somebody, that person only would have the right of getting the seaweed upon them. I am very much in favour of the proposal of the Lord Advocate, because I know that there is no dispute so common among the tenants as that about the property of sea ware. I think it is, therefore, necessary that powers should be given to the Land Commission to settle disputes in every particular, because experience has shown that there are tenants who get up very early in the morning, look out for the seaweed, take it all away if they can, and leave none for their neighbours; and seaweed, when once cut, can only be cut with advantage every second year. In some localities the people make an arrangement among themselves to cut the seaweed in alternative years; and if, in dragging the sea, they get the floating weed, it is brought in and divided proportionately among themselves. The very point mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Orkney (Mr. Lyell)—namely, the case of tenants whose holdings are not immediately adjacent to the seashore, has constantly given rise to dreadful disputes. These tenants think they have quite as good a right to some portion of the seaweed as those who live on the seashore itself, and there have been serious disputes in consequence. Allusion has been made to the industry of kelp-burning. I am told that that is a reviving industry at this moment, and that the iodine made out of the kelp is advancing very much in value from what it was some years ago. We all know that seaweed was of extreme value not very long ago. Many landlords gained hundreds a year from it, and so did the tenants. Some of the proprietors let the land on which seaweed can be obtained to their tenants, and received a royalty upon the seaweed itself. Owing to the discovery of other means by which iodine can be produced, seaweed has declined in value; but it is still a very valuable property, when iodine in a remunerative quantity and at a fair price can be obtained from it. Therefore, it must be remembered that seaweed is not merely a manure, but that iodine is made out of it, and that it forms a valuable commodity. My hon. Friends in Scotland will know, however, whether they are giving away in this matter something which is of great value both to the tenant and the landlord. At any rate, it is quite certain that the matter ought to be determined in any scheme to be laid down by the Land Commission, and such scheme should settle what the tenants are to have and what they are not to have.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): It occurs to me that, whether we discuss the matter now or on a subsequent clause, it is important to consider the question of access. There may be an abundance of seaweed, and a right given by Parliament to use it; but if there is no right of access there will still be constant disputes. It is, therefore, most desirable that the question of access should be dealt with.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I am not going to continue the discussion; but I wish to make an appeal to hon. Members who have more admiration for this Bill than I have—mine is very small indeed—that if they want the Bill to pass, it is desirable they should limit their speeches to the Amendments, and not introduce irrelevant matter as to Ireland, and iodine, and other scientific questions. I do not care whether the Bill passes or not; but if hon. Members wish it to pass, they ought to limit their speeches at least to five minutes, and not to occupy 20 minutes upon a scientific disquisition, as was the case with the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Mitchell Henry).

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I decline to accept the implied censure of my hon. Friend, who has certainly talked 50 times as much about the Bill as I have. I congratulate my hon. Friend upon the fact, because he always talks with perfect satisfaction to himself, and, I am sure, to all who hear him. All I did was to give the Committee some practical information derived from cases which are analogous. I merely wished to point out that the question is not so simple as some hon. Members appear to think.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I have no doubt that we are all anxious to make as much progress with the Bill as possible; but, at the same time, our progress ought to be judicious, and we ought not to insert Amendments by wholesale without giving them proper consideration. I wish there were more hon. Gentlemen in this House who were acquainted with the question of utilizing the kelp on the Coast of Scotland. Am I wrong in saying that there are Islands off the West Coast of Scotland where the proprietors let out the right of collecting kelp to Companies? If so, how will such contracts be affected by this Amendment?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): It appears to me that under this power the provision would not necessarily mean that the tenant was to have the exclusive use of the seaweed, but that such appropriation of it might be made as would be reasonable, under the circumstances, to all the interests which might be concerned. If the landowner had the right to which my right hon. Friend has referred, and there exists a large quantity of seaweed, I think the Commission might say—"So much to the proprietor for this purpose, and so much to the crofters for their own necessary use for the land."

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I would suggest that, in order to make progress, the hon. Member for Orkney (Mr. Lyell) should withdraw his Amendment.

Mr. LYELL: I thought I had already done so.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I will merely mention the first part of my Amendment, in order to draw the attention of the Lord Advocate to the subject. It empowers the Land Commission to cause provision to be made of suitable allotments and houses for farm servants on the farms on which they are employed.

Amendment proposed,

In page 5, line 40, at end, add—"It shall be competent for the Land Commission, by an order under this section, to cause to be provided suitable allotments and houses for farm servants on the farms on which they are employed on application made to it for this purpose."—(*Dr. R. McDonald.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I cannot accept the Amendment, because I do not think it is germane to the Bill. I may, however, express a hope, although it is only a personal hope, that an opportunity may be afforded for dealing with the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member withdraw the Amendment?

Dr. R. McDONALD: Yes.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Dr. R. McDONALD: I am quite agreeable to alter my second Amendment in the way the Lord Advocate has suggested. It will then empower—

"The Land Commission to draw up a scheme regulating the use of seaweed, peat bogs, and heather or grass used for thatching purposes,"

and to include all these purposes in a fixed rent. I do not think there is any occasion to say much upon the Amendment after the discussion which has just taken place. There is only one remark I desire to make, and it has reference to the fear which has been expressed as to the difficulty of access. Now, practically, there is no difficulty of obtaining access to seaweed at all. It can be got at everywhere by boat; and, therefore, there can be no difficulty of access whatever.

Amendment proposed,

In page 5, line 40, at end, add—"It shall be competent for the Land Commission to draw up a scheme regulating the use of seaweed, peat bogs, and heather or grass used for thatching purposes, and to include the charges for all these in a fixed rent."—(*Dr. R. McDonald.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I would suggest another Amendment, after the word "seaweed"—namely, to insert the words "by crofters occupying holdings contiguous to the seashore." [*Cries of* "No!"] I have taken those words from the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Orkney (Mr. Lyell). I think that we ought not to give rights which do not at present exist to persons whose holdings are at a considerable distance from the seashore.

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, to insert, after the word "seaweed," the words "by crofters occupying holdings contiguous to the seashore."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I speak under correction; but I am very much mistaken if crofters who are not contiguous to the seashore are not as much entitled to the seaweed as crofters who are contiguous to the seashore, and may want it just as much. Unless all crofters who desire to use sea ware are included in the Bill future difficulty will be sure to arise.

Mr ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): It is quite clear that the fact of being on the seashore would not create a right in regard to the ownership of the seaweed. I think if my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate will leave the matter to the Land Commission they will be able to do what is right.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E): I apprehend that the law is as the Lord Advocate has stated—namely, that no man has a right to the seaweed except the man who owns the foreshore of the estate. Where the landlord has crofts situated inland, but not far from the seashore, he has given the privilege of collecting seaweed, not only to crofters whose holdings are on the seashore, but to crofters whose holdings are inland. But what is to happen to his rights if this Amendment is adopted? The principle put forward by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) is that the crofter is to be the heir of all the privileges of the landlord, whatever those privileges may be—not merely the privilege of holding the croft as a freeholder, but those privileges which, at present, appertain to the landlord only. I must express my very great surprise that the Government should desire to increase the power of interference with the landlord. They are absorbing in the hands of the Commission not only every duty, but the power of making every species of bargain, not only between the landlord and tenant, but between one tenant and another. I confess I think that the more we limit the power of the Commission, consistently with the interests of the population concerned, the better. That is a general observation which I desire to make. There is, further, one particular observation which I wish to make, and it is to express a hope that the Government will introduce into the Amendment words which will save existing rights. I am afraid that if the Amendment is carried in its present form, it will be found that such rights and privileges as those which have already been adverted to—rights under which the landlord has contracted with a Company to turn the seaweed into an article of commercial profit—will be materially impaired, and the people which these Companies now employ would have their interests seriously damaged. I would, therefore, ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman to introduce words which will have the effect of saving existing rights.

The CHAIRMAN: It will be convenient, in the first place, to dispose of the proposed Amendment to the Amendment.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): After what has been said by my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeenshire (Mr. Esslemont), it appears to me that there should be some limit to the power of collection, and that it is necessary to introduce some words, such as "on the same estate." It would hardly be proper to allow a tenant to go roving from one estate to another for the purpose of collecting sea ware; and, perhaps, it would be best to introduce, after the words "used for thatching purposes," the words "by the crofters on the same estate."

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman propose to withdraw his Amendment?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Yes.

Amendment to the said Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR): I now propose an Amendment which will make the proposed Amendment read—"for regulating the use by crofters on the same estate of seaweed, &c."

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, to insert, after the word "use," the words "by crofters on the same estate."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I am afraid that a difficulty may arise from the use of these words, which I think are hardly the right ones to apply. The word "use" amounts to something which has occurred in the past, and the Land Commission will find it somewhat difficult to judge in arriving at a decision whether the taking of sea ware has been a right or not.

DR. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I am quite willing to agree to the Amendment suggested by the Lord Advocate.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I think that it is very important that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate should propose some Amendment for giving access to the seashore.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny S.): I should like to know whether the Lord Advocate has considered the propriety of including the cottars in this clause? I believe that in numerous cases the landlords refuse to grant the cottars the right to take seaweed for the purpose of sale.

MR. FRASER-MACINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I also am of opinion that the Lord Advocate might agree to the insertion of the word "cottars," because there are questions included in the clause with regard to the cutting of peat and the thatching of houses which will materially affect that class. As these cottars have no land, I do not see how they are to be benefited by this provision unless they are specially included in it.

MR. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): I was going to suggest the insertion of words which I think would define the purposes for which sea ware is to be taken. I think the clause, as it is proposed to amend it, will only embarrass the Land Commission in the exercise of the powers conferred upon them. The clause includes power to the Land Commission to draw up a scheme for regulating the use of heather or grass in connection with thatching purposes. As a general rule, the privilege of cutting heather or grass is not conferred as a matter of right upon the crofter, but with the assent of owner; and, as a rule, something in the shape of rent or acknowledgment is paid, not to the owner of the land, but to the person from whose holding the grass or heather is taken. I would suggest that my right hon. and learned Friend might deal with the matter by inserting in the clause words to provide that the sea ware should only be taken for the purpose of manuring the land. That is really what sea weed is wanted for. The right. hon. and learned Gentleman has spoken of this sea ware as being essential to the cultivation of the land. Now, I do not consider that sea ware is essential to the cultivation of the land. I think, on the contrary, that in many instances it does more harm than good where it is used. One of the disadvantages the Committee are labouring under is that the Bill is under the charge of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who are altogether ignorant of the circumstances for which they are legislating.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): There is one point to which I wish to call the attention of the Committee. I quite understand the system which my right hon. and learned Friend proposes to inaugurate—namely, that the Land Commission shall have power to draw up a scheme for regulating the use of seaweed for these purposes, so that they may settle the particular area over which the crofters who make application to them are to exercise this privilege. But I want to know whether the power of the Commissioners will be exhausted when they have once drawn up a scheme, or whether there will be a recurring power to regulate future questions which may arise? That is a point of very great importance, and I see in the clause we are now considering an illustration of one of the great defects of the establishment of a Land Commission at all. You will have a third party continually standing between the landlord and the tenant, and taking away the responsibility and interest of the landlord in the administration of the estate. It has hitherto been one of the duties, as well as the privileges, of the landlord to harmonize as far as possible the interests of the several holdings on his estate. This, however, is an illustration of an opposite system about to be introduced in which you subordinate the responsibility of the landlord to a new tribunal for the settlement of these matters. I think that is a very serious question, and that it may, to a large extent, destroy the value of the property by subjecting it to this sort of dual control or double system of administration. Landlords who have hitherto been most loyal in the discharge of their duties, will throw up the matter in disgust if a third party is to be brought in between them and their tenants for the regulation of these trivial questions. By taking this course, you weaken the responsibility of the landlord towards his tenants, destroy his public spirit, and lessen his sense of duty in a manner which cannot be otherwise than prejudicial to the crofters. I would, therefore, ask whether the Lord Advocate contemplates that there shall be a recurring right on the part of the Land Commission to settle new schemes?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): As this part of the Bill stands, and taking the Amendment as an Amendment to this part of the Bill, the regulation of the matter is intended to be a thing done when the enlargement of the holding is made. The part of the Bill we are now considering relates merely to the enlargement of the holding. The crofter cannot set up a title *ad hoc;* but the question must be regulated and settled when the addition is made to the holding.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I presume that when the Land Commission have laid down a scheme, and have provided certain terms and conditions as between the tenant and landlord, they will have the power of seeing the scheme carried out?

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I quite see the difficulty pointed out by the Lord Advocate in the way of including the cottars in the proposed Amendment; but I would ask him whether he may not be able, at a later stage of the Bill, to introduce an Amendment giving the cottars a right to turbary and turf?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: This is a provision which distinctly applies to crofters, and does not deal with cottars at all.

Amendment to the said proposed Amendment *agreed to.*

Question proposed, "That the Amendment, as amended, be there inserted."

Mr. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): I think it would be desirable to restrict the right of the crofters to the use of the seaweed for manuring purposes, those being the purposes for which the Lord Advocate desires to confer the right upon them. If they do not require it for those purposes, in the event of seaweed becoming a costly commodity as it has been on many previous occasions, this clause would give to the crofter the right of taking seaweed to be used in the manufacture of kelp. Now, I do not think that that could be contemplated by the right hon. and learned Gentleman in framing the Amendment; but unless some additional words are inserted in it, I cannot see how the crofter could be prevented from exercising his right in that way. Unless a restriction in regard to the use of turf and peat bogs is also imposed, a great deal of confusion and litigation will undoubtedly ensue. All these things belong to somebody, and form part of an estate, and I do not think it is possible for the Government to contemplate that the crofter shall have an absolute right of carrying away peat and turf at his own option. The only effect of this clause, as it stands, will be to produce litigation; and I think it very absurd that an Act should be passed to promote litigation. Of course, it is impossible that the right hon. and learned Gentleman can have had in his mind the interests of his own Profession; but I certainly think that that is the only good purpose this provision can serve. As it is said in Scotland—"It is an ill wind that blows nobody good;" and, undoubtedly, if this Bill becomes law in its present shape, it will admirably serve the purposes of the lawyers, if of no one else.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): As this is a practical point, perhaps the hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) will allow me to say a word upon it. I think the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk (Mr. Ramsay) is a very important one. The object of allowing the crofters to take this seaweed is to enable them to manure the land in order that they may live upon the holding, and not find themselves reduced to a position of destitution. Experience, however, has shown that there are many of the small tenants who will sell their rights to the seaweed to larger tenants, who will contract with some Company to make use of it, not for manuring purposes, but for the manufacture of kelp. If the crofters are tempted in that way, and sell the manure, which ought to go upon their land, to some speculative neighbour for the purpose of being utilized in the manufacture of kelp, the condition of their crofts will be no better in the end than it is now. This is a practical point, in regard to which I have had a great deal of practical experience on the West Coast of Ireland, and I think the Lord Advocate should consider if he cannot put in some words to restrict the use of the seaweed to manuring purposes, which is a legitimate object.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I would remind hon. Members that the seaweed, and other things, will be included in the amount of rent fixed, and will therefore be paid for by the crofter with his own money. Seeing that the crofter is paying for what he gets, I do not see why the Committee should be so particular as to the purpose to which he applies it.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The hon. Member appears to think that the crofter will have a right to use the privilege given to him by this Bill in the way contemplated by the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Mitchell Henry). I will remind the hon. Member for Falkirk (Mr. Ramsay) that although he made a speech upon this subject, he did not conclude by moving an Amendment in the sense of his observations.

Mr. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): I thought I had done so. I will move to insert the words "to manure the holding."

The CHAIRMAN: Where does the hon. Member propose to insert those words?

Mr. RAMSAY: I would insert them after the words "on the same estate." The clause would then read—"used by crofters on the same estate to manure the holding."

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the Amendment ought to come in after the word "seaweed."

Mr. RAMSAY: I accept the suggestion.

Amendment proposed, after the word "seaweed," to insert the words "to manure the holding."—(*Mr. Ramsay.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I think that the words proposed by my hon. Friend are altogether unnecessary, and in some cases they would be vexatious, because there have been instances of great destitution in some of the Islands of Scotland, during which cattle have had to be grazed on seaweed, and even the people have had to eat it. Surely there can be no idea that the crofters will set up any large business for the manufacture of kelp.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I should have concurred with the observations of my right hon. and learned Friend, if it were not for the remark which fell from the hon. Member for Aberdeenshire (Mr. Esslemont) just now. The hon. Member said that although the principal object was to provide that the crofter should be able to get a supply of seaweed for the purpose of manuring his croft, nevertheless when he had once obtained it he ought to be able to do anything he liked with it.

Mr. McIVER (Devon, Torquay): I do not understand that the Amendment would create any new right. It only proposes to regulate rights which exist at present. [Mr. A. J. Balfour: Not rights.] Certainly the crofter has rights now, or, if the right hon. Member for Manchester prefers the words, they have immemorial privileges. The use of seaweed by the crofter has been recognized in regard to most of the crofters' holdings in the Highlands and

Islands of Scotland, and it is not proposed by the Amendment to create any new right. As far as I understand the clause, it is only proposed to give the Land Commission power to draw up a scheme for regulating the use of seaweed; therefore, I think that a great deal of what has been said has no reference whatever to the real point at issue.

Amendment (*Mr. Ramsay*) *negatived.*

Amendment (*Dr. R. McDonald*), as amended, *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Clause, to add the words "due regard being had to existing interests."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question put, "That those words be there added."

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 108; Noes 177: Majority 69.—(Div. List, No. 65.)

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I think the reason for the Amendment I am about to move is obvious. It is clear that crofters and cottars in townships where there are no roads should not be compelled to pay for them. The Commissioners found that in many places in the Highlands there were no roads, although rates for roads had been paid. In some cases there were no roads nearer than 10 miles, and there is an instance of a place with a population of 400, which is at a very considerable distance from any road. I have received a great many letters on this subject, amongst others from the people of Skye Island, who asked me to put down this Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

In page 5, at end, add—"The Land Commission shall have power to order that township crofters and cottars be relieved of road rates, so long as there are no roads to the townships."—(*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Asher) (Elgin, &c.): I have no doubt that roads in the neighbourhood of some townships are not in a satisfactory condition; but the proposal of my hon. Friend is to incorporate into this Bill legislation with regard to a matter with which it has nothing to do. This is an Amendment which would be appropriate to a Road Bill; but it is certainly not appropriate in a Bill dealing with the tenure of crofters' holdings. It is one of very doubtful propriety besides, because it makes a proposal for the maintenance of roads of a partial character, which it would be very difficult to carry out. Although the roads in the vicinity of a township may not be as good as may be desired, the roads to other parts of the county are satisfactory, and therefore it cannot be said that the people in question get no benefit from them.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I think the hon. and learned Gentleman has not read the Amendment of my hon. Friend. There is no complaint as to the quality of the roads. I understand the reason for the Amendment to be that there are no roads at all to some townships, but that the crofters and cottars have to pay nevertheless.

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): In some parts of my own constituency there is no road at all; I had to charter a special steamer to get there. The people there do not know what a road is. One man with a croft of an acre and a-half assured me he was paying 10*s.* a-year for road money, although there was no road in the place.

Amendment *negatived.*

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The Amendment which I have put on the Paper is one embodying a very important principle. But in the speech in which I introduce it to the Committee I shall endeavour to consult the exigencies of the Government with regard to time rather than the magnitude of the subject. The object of the Amendment is to give to every landlord, when the State steps in and takes from him the management of his land, the power to dispose of the land. It gives to every landlord power to say—"If you forbid me to use my land in the manner in which it has been hitherto used—if you prevent my being full owner of my property, I do not object to it, but take the ownership yourself." It will be observed that this Amendment is in strict analogy with the procedure of English law wherever land is taken for public purposes. If a Railway Company requires land, the owner has the power to sell outright his property at a price which is generally settled by arbitration. If this Amendment be carried, you will avoid the system of joint ownership which you have tried in Ireland, and found to fail, which you are about to try in the North of Scotland, where you will also find it fail, and which you may be tempted to try in other parts of the United Kingdom, with the like disastrous results. I have been long a convert to the theory that it would be greatly for the social advantage of the country if we could increase the number of freeholds. I do not approach this question so much from the landlord's point of view as from the point of view of one who desires to see stability given to the institutions of the country by a large multiplication of the number of owners of land; and, of course, the direct result of my Amendment would be to substitute for tenants to whom you give fixity of tenure and fair rent, an equal number of freeholders, who would in no way be dependent on the Land Court or the landlord. The hon. Member for Bermondsey (Mr. Thorold Rogers), in a speech made a day or two ago, said that one of the chief objects which this Legislature should have in view was to restore those amicable and harmonious relations between landlords and tenants which had been so unhappily shaken by the legislation and agitation of the last few years. Sir, I entirely agree with the wish expressed by that hon. Member; but I greatly fear that in the Highlands we shall be too late. Things have got to that pass in the Western Highlands that I do not believe it is possible by any legislation to restore the old friendly relations which once subsisted between the landlord and tenant; and I am certain that by the legislation you are now engaged in you will not move a step in that direction. The landlord in the Western Highlands, if this Bill is passed, will feel—and in my opinion will be justified in feeling—that henceforth the only duty he has in connection with the land is to extract from it as much rent as the Land Court will give him. Formerly—and if anyone doubt my words, I point to the Report of the Commission—the relation between the landlord and tenant in the Western Highlands was one not only of justice, but of generosity. I believe that henceforth, if you pass this Bill, when the terms on which the tenant holds from the landlord are fixed by the State, when you have raised up the immovable figure of this Land Commission, all feelings of personal friendship, all feelings of mutual interdependence between the two classes, will be for ever destroyed. The landlord henceforth will not regard the misfortunes of the tenant as misfortunes which he is bound to share and, if possible, to obviate; he will feel that he has the right in law and equity to exact that rent which the Land Commission awards him to the uttermost farthing, and to give nothing in return to the tenant who occupies his land. The hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) uttered a prophecy, of which, to do him justice, he is doing his best to bring about the fulfilment, when he said that landlordism in this Kingdom was doomed—that the landlords were destined, at no distant date, to become rent-chargers of their property, and with very small rent-charges indeed. Well, Sir, I do not think that would be a desirable state of things, or one to be proud of. If you object to landlordism in the sense of large landed proprietors, by all means, after due consideration, substitute for it small proprietors; but do not attempt to substitute this absurd scheme of small properties held in joint ownership. Of all others, is this the time to initiate an experiment of that kind? I am sorry that the Prime Minister, who was in his place a short time ago, is not now present; but what does the right hon. Gentleman think of the scheme of double ownership which he initiated not long since in Ireland? Does he regard that scheme as an unqualified success; or are we all in a dream when we suppose that one of the grand proposals which is kept in view is to come down to this House and ask us, at vast risk and expenditure of public money, to abolish the very scheme of double ownership which was adopted with regard to Ireland in 1880, and which you have adopted in the most reckless mood for Scotland in 1886? I remember a speech made by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), in which he said he would never have assented to the Bill unless the principle of double ownership were to be the prelude to a system of peasant proprietorship. If we are to adopt this system of peasant proprietorship, let us not take that doubtful step before we reach the object of our wishes. Let us rather adopt the system which, in my opinion, is the only proper one—namely, that of giving to large or small owners the management of that part of the soil which is legally their own. I do not wish to trespass any longer on the time of the Committee. I think they will have seen in the words I have addressed to them that the question which I have laid before them is no small one. I would warn hon. Members who, perhaps, know little of the technicalities of this Bill, and have listened, it may be, with weariness to these long discussions on points of law and practice, that on the fate of this Amendment or of the principle which it embodies may depend the future of land legislation in this country. I have not put down my Amendment in the interest of Highland landlords—I believe very few Highland landlords would take advantage of it—I put it down in view of the time when the experiment now extended to Scotland may be, with still greater rashness, extended to England, and when those who take part in this debate will look back on the question we have initiated to-day and feel that the principles which I now advocate are the only principles which can guide legislation upon and are consistent with the present system of land tenure in England.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Clause, to add the words—"An order under this section shall not take effect if the landlord or landlords shall offer to sell the lands affected thereby, as herein provided. The Land Commission shall cause a copy of every such order to be forthwith delivered to such landlord or landlords. The landlord or landlords may, by writing under their hands, delivered to the sheriff clerk within thirty days after receipt of the copy of the order, intimate that he or they are willing to sell the said lands. Every such intimation by the landlord or landlords shall be held to import an offer to sell the said lands to the crofters named in the said order, for a sum amounting to twenty-five years' purchase of the rent fixed in the said order, and such offer shall be open to acceptance for thirty days from the intimation of the offer. The price shall be payable as follows: not less than one-fifth part on acceptance of the offer, and the remaining four-fifths in portions of not less than one-twentieth each year thereof for twenty years, interest being chargeable on the portion unpaid at the rate of three and a-half per cent. per annum. The unpaid portion of the price shall form a real burden on the lands. The landlord shall have right, on failure of due payment of any instalment, to reacquire the said lands on repayment by him of the moneys paid to him."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not propose to follow the right hon. Gentleman over the very large field of discussion which he has opened, because his speech has not only been a second reading speech against this Bill which we have before us, but also a second reading speech against a Bill which we have not seen, but which the right hon. Gentleman anticipates we may soon see. Now, that almost fills the imagination with alarm both with regard to the past and the future. If we are bound to go back and make a second reading speech, and also forecast what may be the legislative proposals of the future, we should be going very far afield. I ask the Committee to consider where we really are in this discussion. We have got the principles of security of tenure, fair rent, and compensation for improvements settled by the clauses of the Bill which we have already passed. We have also agreed to the principle of enlargement of crofters' holdings by way of compulsory leasing; and, more than that, we have got all the leading principles of the Bill not only recognized by the second reading being taken without a division, but by all the principal clauses being passed by the Committee. Therefore, the few words I shall say will have relation purely to the practical stage which we have reached in the discussion of the Bill. Well, Sir, I say that I entirely demur to the notion that the proposals which the Committee have passed create anything that can be described as dual ownership. There would have been some justice in the description if free sale had been admitted; but inasmuch as free sale has not been admitted, there is, I repeat, nothing in the Bill which can be reasonably described as dual ownership, but simply tenancy subject to statutory conditions. The relation of landlord and tenant will remain. With regard to the Amendment, the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman is that, if the application for the enlargement of holdings already sanctioned by the Committee is presented, it may be met by a counter offer which is to defeat the object of the provision—that is to say, the Legislature is assumed to have enacted that the Land

Commission shall have power to make additions to holdings in the way of tenancy, and that is then to be met by an offer to sell, which those who propose it know perfectly well would make the Bill absolutely nugatory. Who is to buy the land? Is the crofter to buy it? I do not think that the crofter has the desire, the will, or the ability to become a landed proprietor. He has been a tenant in the past, and it is proposed that he should be a tenant in the future on better conditions. I do not see why the crofter should wish to become a landed proprietor if he gets a fair rent and fixity of tenure; but if the landlord wills to sell, and if the crofter wills to buy, then let them buy and sell like anybody else in the market. Therefore, I say that, as between a willing seller and a willing buyer, the provision proposed by the right hon. Gentleman is needless. But it is proposed for the ease of the man who does not want to buy and who cannot buy; and I say it would be altogether idle to have passed the provisions of the Bill which have been passed if the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman were to be accepted. The Committee would stultify themselves by so doing, because it proceeds upon the assumption of a condition of things which is known to be impossible. Now, as I have said, I do not know that we need pursue the discussion over the large field which the right hon. Gentleman has traversed. I admit that there is something novel, so far as legislation is concerned, in this Bill. I do not apologize for this; I applaud it. I am glad that this subject has been taken up, and that, so far, we have formulated in this Bill conditions which we say have existed historically. Their application is likely to give a little elbow room to the Highland crofter.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): The theory of my right hon. Friend's proposal is that the provisions already assented to operate a complete change in the rights of property which previously existed in the proprietor of land, and that it is not right to say, while taking land for public purposes and in the interest of the community, that the owner of the land should not have power to divest himself of it. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has missed one of the points of the Amendment. If the proposal had been that the market should be declared open to the persons willing to sell and to buy, there would have been left over the question as to what was the value of the subject; and I am sure hon. Gentlemen opposite would have said that that would be stultifying the intention of this legislation, because the higgling of the market might take place. The Amendment settles the price at which the sale should take place, and all is done that is required to bring about a purchase. If you say it is idle to attempt to bring about a sale with persons who have no money to buy with, I reply that that point has already been got over by the authors of the Bill, because you have placed by legislation impecunious persons in a position to obtain additional land which notoriously they are unable to stock and if that difficulty has been surmounted by hon. Gentlemen opposite, I think they may stretch their courage a little further and clear the ditch between the want of money for stock and the want of money for land. We say that if this object be one which it is fair to accomplish, the money ought to be found for the purpose, and, feeling the truth of that, we challenge the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite to deny the justice of the proposal in its principle.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has, I think, made a mistake as to the object of the Bill. The Bill takes cognizance of two parties who are in the position of partners, each of them having property in the soil, and one of whom has by law been enabled to override custom and raise the rent of the other. The Bill is merely for the purpose of preventing one of the partners unduly taking advantage of the other, and establishing equity between them. The practical meaning of the Amendment is to prevent any of the clauses of the Bill taking effect for the benefit of the crofter. If the crofter gets a fair rent fixed, the landlord, instead of conforming to the decision of the Land Commission, may offer to sell the tenant the land in lieu of it, and the first thing which the tenant would have to do would be to pay one-third or one-fifth of the purchase money—you might as well say that he should pay a fiftieth part of the purchase money, for he would be just as able to pay the one as the other. The crofter is poor and scarcely able to pay for the stock he has, and unless there were a scheme by which the State could lend to the Local Authorities, and the Local Authorities to the crofter, the purchase of the land would be impossible. If such a scheme comes forward, I, for one, should not then oppose the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. I believe, with the right hon. Gentleman, that the landlords must go, and that it is only a question of their getting away under equitable conditions. I would not like to expropriate even Irish landlords without giving them some compensation for interests which past legislation has created and public opinion sustained. I agree with the Lord Advocate that this is a question which is not pertinent to the present clause; it opens up a new question altogether, and in practice the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman would only make the clauses of the Bill inoperative.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour), in introducing this Amendment, said that he did so because he objected to dual ownerships. I would point out that the effect of the Amendment, if it were adopted in its present form, would be to place the tenant absolutely at the mercy of the landlord. By the Amendment the landlord could compel the tenant to purchase the fee of the fringe of added land, while keeping him a mere tenant of the original holding subject to many restrictions.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Perhaps I may be allowed to say that I have another Amendment down, which deals with the question of new holdings.

MR. TREVELYAN (Hawick, &c.): It is the custom of this House that no one should ever ask other hon. Members not to speak at length except those who have spoken at great length themselves. I certainly have not acquired that privilege, at least in this Committee, and I only rise to ask that this debate may now come to an end, and that, if needs be, we may take a division at once. I can add one observation that may induce the Committee to come to that resolution. I am not in the Government any longer, but I know something of their intentions, and I am afraid there is not the slightest chance that the Government will provide from the public purse the means which my right hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Balfour) appears to aim at as a last hope. The Amendment of my right hon. Friend, without those means provided by Government, would really be a prohibitive Amendment, absolutely destroying the effect of this Bill; and, therefore, as a practical man, I must ask hon. Members to oppose it, and, if possible, to put themselves in a position to oppose it at once by not continuing the discussion.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I have merely one word to add. I have read the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour). I do not think he quite understands my criticism. There are really two clauses introduced by the right hon. Gentleman—one dealing with the original holding and another dealing with the added portion, and it will be in the power of the landlord of his own option to put either clause into operation, and to compel the tenant to become the freeholder of part of his holding and to remain the mere tenant of the rest.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I do not wish to prolong this debate, but I do desire to point out that no one on that side of the House—no Member of the Government—has attempted to contest the force of the plea put forward by my right hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Balfour). What does he desire to insist upon when a novel principle of legislation is introduced like this? The effect of what my right hon. Friend said was this—that when the Government stepped in and insisted upon dealing with a man's property in opposition to his wishes, and in opposition to what he believed to be his interest, you should at least give to the landlord in turn the power of insisting that you should buy his land outright instead of compelling him to let it upon a compulsory lease. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate had nothing to say against the justice of the proposition, but he met my right hon. Friend by saying—"Oh, it is too late to raise this discussion; we cannot go back on what we have done." But this is a totally new principle. It is true that fair rent and fixity of tenure have been accepted, but the present proposal is to make a landlord let his land on compulsory lease for ever. The Lord Advocate says—"Well, but this Amendment is merely an Amendment to render nugatory the whole of the Bill." And he proceeded to ask—"Who is to buy the land—is the crofter to buy it?" It does not follow that such an Amendment as this renders the Bill nugatory, and who is to buy the land is a question for the Government to settle. When they undertake to introduce novel principles of this kind into measures of this sort, and when we, in reply, insist upon their taking a course the force of which they cannot contradict, it rests with them to provide for the difficulties which may arise out of the evils inherent in the nature of those principles. That being the case, it is impossible for us to accept the Bill in its present shape; and unless the Government do see their way to make provisions of the nature we require, whether defeated or not, the supporters of the Amendment must take a division as a protest.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I shall not stand long between the Committee and a division; but I desire to say a word in support of the important principle contained in the Amendment of my right hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Balfour). I am anxious to make progress with the Bill, and I have endeavoured to make the measure a good one; just, not only to the crofter, but to the landlord. Hon. Gentlemen opposite are too ready to give all to one side and nothing to the other. It must be admitted that the landlords do not deserve ill of this House in regard to their treatment of the crofters up to this time. It is admittedly well known that there has been no attempt on the part of landlords to exact many of the arrears which have given rise to great difficulty, and which are the chief source of contention on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite. On the contrary, the landlords have shown a very generous spirit towards their tenantry; had they not done so there would not have been half the difficulty which now exists. The landlords do not wish to evict—they have not evicted —and the consequence is that in many instances they have not received any rent at all for years and years. Now, when you come to introduce a new principle into Scotch legislation, it is not fair to say that the landlords are not entitled to anything in the sense of justice from this House. The right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) says he is sure it would be very difficult to persuade the Government to give any money towards enabling tenants to buy their land from the landlords, and thus get rid of the difficulty; but there may be other Governments in store for this House before a very long period of time has elapsed, who may look upon the question in a very different light. I do not believe that were another Government to come into power in a few weeks, or possibly a few days, they would withhold what is only just and fair in the interests of the landlords. I hope my right hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Balfour) will take the sense of the Committee upon his Amendment.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 123; Noes 215: Majority 92.—(Div. List, No. 66.)

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 13 (Available land).

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 1, to leave out the words "pasture or grazing."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. F. HARDCASTLE (Lancashire, S. E., Westhoughton): I beg to move, Mr. Courtney, the first of the few Amendments which stand in my name—namely, to leave out "it fulfils the following conditions, viz. (1)," in page 6, line 2. I should like to explain how it comes about that I, an English Member and a new Member, venture to intrude myself upon this occasion. I am afraid that the Scotch Members may think that I am unacquainted with the Highlands; but when I tell them that for the last 15 years I have spent more time in the Highlands of Scotland than I have spent in my own home in Lancashire, they will admit that if I do not know something of the condition of affairs in the Highlands I ought to. The deep interest I feel in the people and in the country which has exercised so powerful an influence over me for so many years is my excuse for intruding myself upon the attention of the Committee. But I am convinced it does not require a long residence in Scotland to enable anyone to see the force of my first Amendment, which I simply move in the interests of grammar and common sense. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will read the clause, he will see that the 2nd sub-section cannot be called a sub-section at all. It says that land shall not be deemed available "unless it fulfils the following conditions," and then one condition is given. What purports to be the second condition is really not a condition. The so-called 2nd sub-section provides—

> "If the land is subject to an existing lease. . . . it shall not be competent to assign any part thereof," &c.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 2, to leave out the words "it fulfils the the following conditions, viz. (1)."—(*Mr. F. Hardcastle.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I was waiting to hear where the defects in grammar are when, suddenly, the speech of the hon. Member came to an end. It may be there is a certain grammatical imperfection in the want of the word "that" at the commencement of the conditions. But really it is immaterial whether the conditions run smoothly or not, if the substance is correct.

Mr. F. HARDCASTLE: Allow me to point out how the clause reads—

> "Land shall not be deemed available . . . . . unless it fulfils the following conditions, viz."

The second condition in the clause is that the land must be subject to an existing lease. Now, that is exactly what you do not wish to express; you wish to say "it shall not be subject to an existing lease."

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: If it is really necessary, I shall be willing to leave the words out. I will consider this question of grammar or phraseology before Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. F. HARDCASTLE: The next Amendment I have to propose is to leave out "near," in line 4, and insert "nearly adjoining." The words "nearly adjoining" form a better definition of the meaning of the framers of the Bill than "near" does. I am sure the promoters of the Bill could not have meant that the crofters should apply for and take land at a considerable distance from their present holdings. I do not know that the words I propose to substitute are the best that could be found; but I maintain that the words "near to" are very vague and indefinite. The crofters are generally remarkably active men, sound in wind and limb, and they would consider something "near to" which perhaps you, Mr. Courtney, would consider a very long way off. I think it is very desirable this point should be made as clear as possible.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 4, to leave out the word "near," and insert the words "nearly adjoining."—(*Mr. F. Hardcastle.*)

Question proposed, "That the word proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not think this Amendment is at all necessary. "Contiguous" means where the boundaries are touching, and "near to" means, of course, where they almost adjoin.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I am bound to say I think the words of my hon. Friend are better than those of the Government—they are more precise—but if the Government strongly object to adopt them, I would not recommend him to press them.

Mr. F. HARDCASTLE: If I am to understand that "near to" means in the close vicinity, I will certainly withdraw.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Sir DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): Mr. Courtney, I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name, in order that the Land Commission may have power to deem as land available for pasture or grazing not only land near to that already in the occupancy of crofters, but land at some previous time occupied by crofters.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 5, after the word "application," to insert the words "or has at some previous time been occupied by crofters."—(*Sir Donald Currie.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): It appears to me that this would be language of limitation against the crofter. It would open a very much wider field. Irrespective of whether there are any crofters in a particular place, the land is to be available.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I understand the Amendment to mean that if there are crofters and there is land not contiguous to their holdings which some time or other has been occupied by crofters, we are not to insist upon contiguity. I think the Amendment is a very reasonable one.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: It must be borne in mind that there may have been an exchange of land at some time or other.

SIR DONALD CURRIE: There are lands of which the crofters have been dispossessed, and I desire that these lands should be brought within the scope of the Bill.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): This Amendment is intended to give to the crofters a greater selection of land. It is one of the chief grievances of the crofters that they have been dispossessed of certain lands; and I think my hon. Friend (Sir Donald Currie) ought to insist upon making this addition to the clause as a sort of indication to the Commission of the steps they should take for the benefit of the crofters.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. ASHER) (Elgin, &c.): This clause enables the Commissioners to take any land which is available for the enlargement of holdings, providing the land is—

> "Contiguous or near to land already in the occupancy of the crofters making the application."

The hon. Gentleman's proposition amounts to this—that land should be taken which has been at some time in possession of crofters, although it is not contiguous or near to the present holdings. Surely that is not a good description of land to take for the purpose of enlarging holdings.

MR. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): I think the language is so vague that the Amendment can serve no purpose whatever. "Has at some previous time been occupied by crofters." What does that mean? What is to be taken as "previous time?" Many lands occupied by the crofters of Perthshire during the last half-century have been taken and cultivated by others. Surely it is not expedient or desirable to give these lands to the crofters again. I do not think that in its present form the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Sir Donald Currie) will do any good in so far as the crofters are concerned; and, therefore, I hope he will either withdraw it, or not waste time by continuing the discussion upon it.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Perhaps the difficulty might be met by adding, after the word "application," the words "from which crofters have been removed during the last 50 years." If that is too long a time, it might be made 30 years.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a separate Amendment.

Amendment *negatived.*

MR. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): Although I disagreed with the last Amendment, I think that some amendment of the clause is necessary. It very often happens that the land which it is desirable to acquire belongs to a different proprietor to that of the land now held by the crofter. It would restrict the operation of the Commissioners if they could only take land belonging to the proprietor of the holding for the enlargement of which they wanted the land. I therefore beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 5, by leaving out all the words after the word "application" to the end of line 6.—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. ASHER) (Elgin, &c.): The adoption of this Amendment would have a most unfortunate effect. It would entitle the Land Commission to take land from one proprietor for the purpose of enlarging the holdings belonging to another proprietor, and the result would be that if a landlord had managed his estate so that the land was fairly distributed amongst his own crofters, he would be subjected to the risk of having his well-managed estate deranged to cure the defects in the management of an adjoining estate. That would be unfortunate. This Act ought to stimulate proprietors so to manage their property that the interference of the Land Court would be as small as possible.

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I think this is as important an Amendment as any we have had. The Bill is being so whittled down by one restriction and another that in the end it will be worth nothing. This is an Amendment which is absolutely necessary in the interest of the crofters. We are the men who have been sent here by the crofters; we know their wishes and their wants, and yet we have not been consulted in the least. This Bill has been drawn up in Edinburgh or in London by lawyers who know little or nothing about the condition of the crofters, and the consequence is it is a Bill which bristles with restrictions favourable to the landlords. I hope my hon. Friend (Mr. M'Culloch) will go to a division, because unless this Amendment is made the Bill will be worth next to nothing.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) Under the sub-sections of this clause practically nothing but unoccupied land can be taken for the purpose of increasing the crofters' holdings. This question is really reduced to one between deer and game and human beings. I most earnestly hope the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch) will carry his Amendment to a division.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): There is no doubt that the Members who represent Highland constituencies consider this a most important Amendment. I know a gentleman in Skye, more kind than his fellow-landlords, who has taken in a considerable number of people evicted from other estates. This gentleman wrote to me lately complaining very strongly indeed that because he has taken in a number of poor people he should be saddled with them for ever, while there are estates which will not be touched at all by the Bill. I hope the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch) will take a division.

Mr. ASHER: May I point out that under the Bill as it stands land will be available for enlarging holdings which is contiguous to the present holdings, and which is in the occupation of the same landlord, whether occupied as a deer forest, grouse moor, or for sporting purposes. The only land not available is land belonging to a different proprietor, or land held on lease for arable or pasture purposes.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 238; Noes 116: Majority 122.—(Div. List, No. 67.)

Mr. F. HARDCASTLE (Lancashire, S.E., Westhoughton): The next Amendment which I have to move, Sir, is on page 6, line 6, after the word "crofters," insert—

> "No matter whether such pasture land be let on lease, either as a sheep farm or deer forest."

Although the object of this Amendment will be brought about by the next Amendment, which is to leave out Sub-section 2, I propose, in order to make it quite sure, to add these words to Sub-section 1. It is a very important matter, because this Bill seems not to respect leases of deer forests, while it does seem to respect the leases of sheep farms. I cannot myself understand why a difference should be made. I think it is very desirable that if the principle of breaking the leases of deer forests is adopted, as appears to be the case in the next sub-section, it should be extended further to the breaking of the leases of sheep farms also, and for this reason—that the land which is contiguous or near to the crofter communities is almost invariably sheep ground. A deer forest is almost always surrounded by a fringe of sheep ground, and the result will be that, unless this Bill is amended in the way in which I propose, I am afraid, from my knowledge of that part of the country, that the crofter will be bitterly disappointed, and I am afraid that he will look upon this portion of the Bill as nothing else than a mockery. I am afraid he will regard it as something like this—"We have asked you for bread. You have asked us to wait nine or ten years, and then you give us a stone." If we want to avoid this we must give them the land they want, and that is sheep land. I shall not be surprised if this Amendment of mine is considered by hon. Gentlemen on these—the Conservative—Benches as rather a Radical one, more especially so when it is noticed that the hon. Members for Caithness (Dr. Clark) and Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) are with me on this point. What I would ask hon. Members on this side of the House to consider, however, is whether they are not straining at a gnat after swallowing a camel? The whole principle of this part of the Bill is entirely new; then why not go a little further and break the leases which are existing in regard to sheep farms? Another point is this—that the Commissioners ought to deal with this question of the extension and improvement of holdings at once, because the Bill only refers to existing holdings. If you admit the principle of breaking the leases of sheep farms, the Commissioners can deal with the whole thing at once, and have done with it. But, on the other hand, if you do not, they will have to wait until these leases have dribbled out — and they may have to wait for a great many years, which will be lost to the crofters. But I advocate this course on much broader grounds. I advocate the putting of sheep farms in the same catagory as deer forests as being only fair, and because if it is not done a very new and very dangerous precedent in legislation will be initiated. I have another Amendment, if the Committee will allow me to refer to it, lower down on the Paper which has for its object to give deer forests the same protection, from having the best portions of them picked out by crofters, as is accorded to sheep farms, and I wish the Lord Advocate will consent to strike a bargain between these two Benches—between the Radical Bench and the Conservative Bench—by accepting both my Amendments. I think that will give a great deal more satisfaction in Scotland than the Bill as it stands. I cannot understand why we should treat deer forests in any different way to sheep farms. Why not tar them both with the same brush? If the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) were here, he would say—"What is sauce for the deer-stalking goose is sauce for the sheep-farming gander," and I think he would say rightly. How can you separate them. It cannot be because one is reserved for recreation and the other produces food, because if that were so it would lead to making distinctions between the manufacture of different qualities of the same kind of goods. It would lead you to a very extraordinary state of things if you carry that system out. It will lead you, for instance, to treat a silk mill to harsher terms than you would treat a cotton mill, because one produces an article of luxury and the other an article of necessity. I submit that if you carry out this system you will kill the deer forests, which are sources of very considerable wealth, and give very considerable employment in the Highlands. There really seems to be so much prejudice surrounding the question of deer forests, that the most fair-minded and right-minded of men when they approach the subject seem as if their vision becomes obscured, and they see things through a distorted light. Now, even the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan), who we all admit is a most fair-minded and impartial man—even he, when he approached the question of deer forests, fell into considerable errors. I should like to point out to him and to the Committee——

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I rise to a point of Order. The hon. Gentleman is discussing his Amendment on line 20, which is quite different, and has nothing to do with the Amendment he is moving.

The CHAIRMAN: The Amendment which the hon. Member is moving deals with the breaking of leases of deer forests, and therefore he is perfectly in Order.

Mr. F. HARDCASTLE: The whole question of deer forests has to be raised, and therefore I think that it is better that it should be raised at once.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I rise to Order, Sir. I should like to ask you whether this 1st sub-section does not refer to the question of contiguity of available land, and does not refer to deer forest, sheep farms, or anything else? It seems to me that this subject would be much more satisfactorily dealt with later on.

The CHAIRMAN: It would be more convenient to deal with this question on Sub-section 2; but I cannot say that the hon. Member is out of Order if he cares to proceed.

Mr. F. HARDCASTLE: Then, Sir, I will withdraw this Amendment, and raise the question on the next sub-section.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member can do that.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. F. HARDCASTLE: The hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark), who has precedence with a similar Amendment, gives way to me on this point, and, therefore, I suppose I am in Order.

[*Cries of* "Go on!"] Well, Sir, in introducing this Bill the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) said this—

> "And now the deer forests are spreading fast at the expense of the sheep walks, and also, unfortunately, at the expense of the poor remains of the crofters' holdings."—(3 *Hansard*, [302] 1308.)

Now, there is no evidence to that effect either in the Report of the Crofters' Commission, nor anywhere else as far as I can find. He said later on—

> "There are cases in which the crofters have been turned out neck and crop in considerable numbers to please certain tenants of the deer forests."—[*Ibid.* 1309.]

Now let me read what was said by the Select Committee on the Game Laws of 1873, which the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) will remember. They say—

> "That the charge against deer forests of having caused a clearance of human habitations cannot be substantiated. Some removals of cottars have taken place from one part of an estate to another; but in no case did they find this was a change for the worse, but in most cases an improvement as regards their habitations and their circumstances."

Then, again, the Crofters' Commission say that they can find only one case of removal of crofters for the purpose of adding to a forest, and this took place some 30 years ago, and I believe I am right in saying that those crofters were reinstated. They say, further—

> "Depopulation cannot be directly attributed to deer forests unless it can be shown that they employ fewer people than sheep farms,"

and they go on to say that—

> "Deer forests employ more people than sheep farms."

Now, I quite expected some hon. Gentlemen from Scotland to follow that line in the debate which took place on the second reading; but they were much too "canny." But the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan), in his speech which he made at the end of the debate, made use of these remarkable words—

> "It has been frequently the case in making clearances for deer forests, and still more frequently in making clearances for sheep walks, that a man who has built a house and cultivated the ground round him, has had to see that ground laid waste and his house pulled down without 1*d.* of compensation for his expenditure or labour."—(3 *Hansard*, [302] 203.)

Now, after what I have read of the Reports of the Game Commission in 1873 and the Crofters' Commission in 1883 I must say I am very much surprised that the late Secretary for Scotland should have made use of such an expression as that, and I feel sure that he could not have meant it. We must look at deer forests without prejudice and in a practical way; we must look upon deer forests as being, practically, the only industry suited to vastly the largest portion of the land of the Highlands which is now occupied by them. Mr. Cameron of Lochiel, who was one of the Commissioners, says—

> "If forests were rendered impossible by harassing legislation seven-eighths of the land of the Highlands now under deer would be unavailable for any other purpose."

And the Crofters' Commission say that—

> "Comparatively little of the land occupied by forests could now be profitably cultivated or pastured by small tenants."

It would be quite easy, under this Bill, for the Land Commissioners to grant a certain portion of a deer forest to crofters for about £50 or £100 a-year; but yet the abstraction might reduce the letting value of the forest by £1,000 a-year. Well, that I submit would be a serious loss of wealth to the district. I need not go further, I think, to prove my case than the Crofters' Commission. As long as the Government stick to the Report of the Crofters' Commission they do not seem to go far wrong; and if they will only abide by that Report in the case of the deer forests it will be a great benefit to the Bill. The Crofters' Commission say on page 95—

> "We do not think it equitable that existing forests should be subjected to exceptional legislation other than that which may be made applicable to agricultural or pastoral lands."

I do not think I can say anything that goes beyond that extract from the Report of the Crofters' Commission, and therefore I will not longer detain the Committee; but I wish to express the hope that the Lord Advocate will see his way to strike the bargain which I have already suggested.

Amendment proposed, to leave out Sub-section 2.—(*Mr. F. Hardcastle.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'If the land is subject to an existing lease for a term of years entered into prior to the commencement of this Act' stand part of the Clause."

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. ASHER) (Elgin, &c.): I shall endeavour to state in a very few words the answer which I have to make to the speech of the hon. Member. I have listened as attentively as I could to what the hon. Member has said; but I confess I am unable to decide in my own mind whether his remarks were made in the interests of the crofters or the deer forests, because I find the hon. Member has an Amendment further down on the Paper by virtue of which it will not be competent to enlarge crofter holdings out of lands occupied as a deer forest or a grouse moor, even though not under lease, if taking a portion of such land would have the effect of prejudicing the letting value of the remainder. Now, the effect of omitting this Sub-section 2, would be to make it competent for the Land Commission to take land which is under an existing lease and occupied as arable or pasture land prior to the passing of this Act for the purpose of enlarging crofters' holdings. On the other hand, the clause as it stands will make it competent to take land which is occupied as a deer forest or a grouse moor, or for other sporting purpose, in order to enlarge crofters' holdings. Now, Sir, with regard to the proposal to take arable or pasture land under lease for the purpose of enlarging a crofter's holding, the Committee will see at once that it is a most serious proposal. The Committee will see that Her Majesty's Government are desirous of doing everything that can be done to improve the condition of the crofters; but it is absolutely necessary that due regard should be paid to the interests of others. What would be the effect of this Amendment? If this section were omitted, we might have a tenant occupying arable or pasture land under lease for a fixed term who had laid out a large amount of capital in stocking his farm, yet his rights would be invaded and ignored, because it is not suggested that any compensation should be paid to him. The hon. Member seems to suggest that certain principles have already been adopted in this Bill of a new and novel character; but I would point out to him that there has been no principle adopted which would warrant the acceptance by the Committee of the proposal which he now makes. It is quite true that in a portion of this clause which relates to deer forests there is an evasion of the rights which at present apply to them; but that principle would not apply to arable land or pasture land under lease, because the only portion of the forest which can be taken for the enlargement of the crofter's holding is a portion that is in the sense of being contiguous or near to the holding. The meaning of the clause is, that suitable land in that position shall not be taken for deer-foresting, so as to be excluded from occupation by crofters. I therefore submit that the Committee ought not to adopt this Amendment, because it would involve a great injustice to tenants occupying arable or pasture land, if their leases were disturbed by taking away part of the land occupied by them.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I am not surprised that the hon. and learned Gentleman was unable to decide whether the remarks of my hon. Friend were made in the interests of the crofters or the deer forests, because my hon. Friend's view is that the interests of the deer forests and the crofters are identical. If you preserve the interests of the deer forests you thereby preserve the interests of the crofters. That is my view, but I will not go into the question of deer forests now. I will merely point out that the amount of money which has been spent by the lessors of deer forests is ten times the amount that has been spent by sheep farmers; and I must say, therefore, that if the Government are not prepared to break the leases of sheep farmers they ought not to countenance the breaking of sporting leases on the faith of which such large sums have been expended. I merely rise now, Sir, to ask my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, S.E., Westhoughton (Mr. F. Hardcastle) whether he thinks it worth while to divide the Committee on this particular form of the Amendment, and whether it would not be better to wait for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Staffordshire (Sir Michael Bass)? If he divides now he will probably have against him everyone who objects to the breaking of leases at all; whereas if he waits for the Amendment I have suggested the question will be strictly confined to the point which he has brought out in his speech. Under these circumstances, I think my hon. Friend will probably see that the discussion which he has initiated will be more appropriately taken upon the Amendment of the Member for Staffordshire (Sir Michael Bass) than upon his own.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I am glad the Amendment has been introduced. This is an important question for the crofter. There is a third standpoint from which to consider it. Just now, as the Bill stands, you have the maximum of irritation to the landlord, and the minimum of benefit to the crofter; and I am doubtful whether the irritation to the landlord will not do more harm than any benefit which may accrue to the crofter can compensate for. The first class of men who drove away the crofter and robbed him of his land was the big sheep farmer of the South; and though the big farmer is now being driven away to make way for the sportsman the crofter does not like either, and wants the land they both occupy. He requires it all. This clause takes away, perhaps, three-fourths of the land that the crofter can now get under Subsection 1. Three-fourths of the land will be under lease. These big sheep farmers are not tenants-at-will from year to year, but they all have leases; and before you can get a single inch of land back for the crofters you will require the sanction of the landlords and the tenants who have the leases. I do not think you will be able to get any of the land if you have to depend upon that sanction; and here, again, you will be promising the crofter land and breaking your promise. If hon. Members understood how these matters affect the real condition of things at present existing in the Highlands they would not support the clause in its present form. We have not brought many facts before you, because we have been anxious to avoid any waste of time; but I must say something as to this important point. As to compensation, no doubt we wish to give full and complete compensation to all the big farmers. We would not confiscate any of their improvements, and if any change is made we should support the giving of compensation to the big farmers for the improvements they have made. We would give them compensation for the arable land and for any other improvements they have made; but we want the arable land and we want the grazing land. In the county I represent the great bulk of the arable land is held by three families as tenants. There are two brothers of the name of Clyde who hold 17 farms, and pay over £4,000 a-year. A brother-in-law of these gentlemen holds five farms, and pays £2,000 a-year. There is another farmer with 22 farms paying £6,000 a-year, another having two farms of £1,000 a-year rental each in Sutherlandshire, his nephew having three farms and paying £2,500, and his cousin having four farms and paying £2,500. So that in this family there are 10 farms for which nearly £7,000 a-year is paid. In another case three brothers in Caithness have nine farms and pay £4,500 a-year, and hold, besides, another large farm in Sutherlandshire. These gentlemen have come from the South, have cleared out the crofters, have formed these big farms, and will hold them unless this House gives power to get rid of them, and give them compensation for their improvements. If the Government are going to introduce such an important principle as is *primâ facie* contained in this Bill, and are going to face the irritation which the establishment of the principle must cause amongst the landowners, they should, after so much bother, give the crofters something. They now propose to give them nothing. If this clause remains in, they will be conferring no benefit whatever on them, because before three-fourths of the land can be taken a double sanction will have to be obtained, and there will not be the smallest chance of securing that. If you get the sanction of the landlord you will want the sanction of these pluralists. The Bill will only give five years for carrying this out, so that unless the leases expire within the five years the land cannot be obtained, and the whole thing will be without effect. As to these deer forests, time after time we have been told that no evidence has been given that land has been taken from the crofters for the purpose of making forests. I wish hon. Gentlemen would read the Report of the Crofter Commission before making these statements. On page 365 they will find the statement of the Rev. Angus M'Rae, Free Church Minister of Glen Urquhart, Inverness-shire. He says—

> "I beg to submit to the Royal Commission that there has been a decrease of the population of this parish during the last "Census decade"

of 342 in a population of 2,438, which I ascribe principally to our large deer forests."

The late laird of Glenmoriston, who was one of the kindest and most humane of the proprietors in the North, erred latterly in adopting the system of turning farms into deer forests; but it is to be hoped that the young heir will reverse this system as soon as he gets full possession of the estate. The deer forest of Balmacaan, in Glen Urquhart, is about 12 miles in length, and is rented for £3,000 per annum; to this forest a great deal of good land has been added, even within the last 16 years, besides the large tracts that were added to it at different periods formerly. About the year 1867 the whole township of Balmacaan, where there were over 20 families who were living pretty comfortably, had to be turned out in a body, as the place was to be directly added to the forest. But the late Earl of Seafield, who was a kind and unoppressive man, gave patches of land elsewhere to such of them as had land at Balmacaan, which they had to improve and build houses upon; and since that time a large piece of the pasture of the farm of Drumclune was added to the forest. Some of the people here remember to have seen 16 tenants on the farm of Shenglie in comfortable circumstances, where there is now only one farmer and a gamekeeper, the most of the pasture having been added to the forest. Of course, there was a small forest above the ordinary pasture from time immemorial; but recently there has been added to it the grazing of about 10,000 sheep from the following farms, namely—2,000 on the hill pasture of Shenglie; 500 on the hill pasture of Drumclune; 1,300 on the hill pasture of Glencoiltie; 1,600 on the hill pasture of Monadh, Leumnach, and Melfourvonie; 800 on the hill pasture of Cat-House; 700 on the hill pasture of Lochletter; 300 on the hill pasture of Allanmore; 2,000 on the hill pasture of Divach; 1,000 on the hill pasture of Ruskich. Four and a-half pages on, we come to the evidence of a parish minister—the Rev. James Bain, of Duthil, and he gives evidence to the same effect. He says the population of his parish has largely decreased since 1841, that the rental has increased four-fold, and that—

"Large areas of the best pasture land in the parish were enclosed for large sheep farms, plantations, and a deer forest. It is estimated that the extent of ground so dealt with is equal to about three-fourths of the area of the whole parish. This necessitated the small farmers generally to part with a considerable number of their sheep and cattle, and with that loss they had henceforth to depend for their rents and living mainly on the produce of their arable holdings, than which nothing could be more precarious and uncertain as a source of livelihood."

On these two points—in the matter of giving more land and of breaking leases—the Bill to be effective must be amended. Unless we can break leases where all the big farmers have them, and where they will not fall in within the five years specified in the Bill as the period during which the Commissioners will have power to seize holdings, you will practically be giving nothing to the crofter.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): If the Government are able to screw their courage up to the point of breaking the sanctity of sporting leases in the case of deer forests, I do not see why they should not go further. I do not see why they should turn their back upon the effort to apply the same principle to sheep farms. The Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Asher) says that no proposal has been made for compensating the sheep farmers, but I would point out that terms can be imposed by the Land Commission, and if the sheep farms are taken it will be on such conditions as the Commissioners consider just. The words of the Act will be quite wide enough to enable the Commission to adjust the relative claims of all the parties. I agree with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) that if you would make the Bill really effectual you must accept this Amendment, and make it possible to take land under lease. There is no such thing as a farm being held from year to year in Scotland. They are all under lease, and if you make an exception of those all that you will be able to touch under the Bill will be those that have been thrown on the landlord's hands—those sheep farms which have been found to be unprofitable, which the tenants have thrown on the landlord's hands, and which the landlord has been unable to relet. I hope Her Majesty's Government will consider the matter very carefully before they reject this Amendment altogether. In the matter of deer forests, I think we have so far broken through the rigid rules of political economy for the public good that we ought to deal in the manner indicated with deer forests.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): It must be evident to the Committee that in the minds of some people this Bill is undergoing considerable development. It began by being an attack on the property of the landlords; but now it is sought to make it an attack on the property of some of the large farmers in the North of Scotland. We are getting on, and I must say that if we are to continue in this course as soon as this Bill has been passed and carried into law we shall see an agitation started, the object of which will be an attack on the property of the crofter by the cottar; and so it will go on getting lower and lower down the scale. I think it is undesirable that this sub-section should be struck out, and I sincerely hope that the Government will adhere to their decision in the matter.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): The Solicitor General for Scotland has shown that there will be little provision for the crofters under the arrangements the Government have made in the clause. The crofter is not to get arable land under any circumstances whatever, nor grazing nor pasture land, if it is under lease, even though it could be easily made available in such a case, for instance, as where a deer forest is contiguous to the holding which he now occupies. So great is the ingenuity of the Scotch factors that, though there may be deer forest leases of this kind, the land of the deer forests can be kept from the crofters by the simple process of turning them into grazing lands. There is no reason why the wild black cattle of the Western Highlands should not be turned into the deer forests, and so far as I can see there would be quite as much sport in hunting and shooting them as in hunting and shooting deer. It would come to much the same thing. I have seen deer quite as easy to approach as the black cattle. Practically, the effect of passing the Bill in its present shape will be that while it professes to give liberally with one hand it will take back with the other all the benefit supposed to be conferred upon the crofter. I should like to see the Government give what they are professing to give liberally and freely. The Agricultural Holdings Act was passed in similar policy, and the result is that it is regarded as practically worthless. The Bill, under the auspices of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), seemed to be a fair one; but examination now shows all its benefits to be shadowy. I am certain it will give very little land to the crofter. As to deer forests, it seems to me unprofitable to take up time in discussing them. We have only assertion on the one side, and assertion on the other. The Commission which sat some time ago came to no conclusion on the question. Evidence was given on the one side and on the other, and no decisive conclusion could be arrived at. I think it is only time the Government should explain fully their policy with regard to land. There are certain Amendments on the Paper, and certain proposals in the Bill; but I would propose a compromise which I think it would be well for them to adopt, and it is that they should give the Land Commissioners power to take grazing land even from the hill farmers. I do not see why theirs should not be dealt with as well as other people's. I should not consent to give the crofters any of the arable land belonging to the hill farmers, because the quantity of arable land they possess in nearly every case is less than it should be. The hill farmer wants means to keep his cattle during the winter just as much as the crofter does. The land now grazed that was at one time arable must be brought back and given to the crofter, and that is what occurs to me as a practical settlement of the question. I think hon. Gentlemen who represent the crofters here would do well to accept this compromise, because, under the proposal of the Government, I am afraid they will get nothing.

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): With regard to this question of leases, it is a fact within my knowledge that within the past two years new leases have been taken by the farmers in the North of Scotland in anticipation of the passing of this Bill. The farmers and the landlords have agreed, the latter saying to the former—"Your lease has five years to run, and instead of waiting for it to expire I will give you a new lease for 19 years or 21 years." This is done to defeat the Bill. What is to prevent all landlords and farmers in the North doing that, and so cutting off the crofter altogether?

MR. F. HARDCASTLE: The Amendment stands in the names of two other hon. Members besides my own; but I do not wish to press it to a division myself. If, however, hon. Members opposite desire to do so, I shall vote for it very cordially.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 225; Noes 105: Majority 120.—(Div. List, No. 68.)

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): We have had a pretty discursive discussion on the deer forests in the course of this debate, and I should be glad if the Committee would now permit me to say a few words on the Motion that stands in my name. I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Burton Division of Staffordshire (Sir Michael Bass) is not in his place to move the Amendment standing in his name. He is fitted by experience to speak on the question, and he would have spoken with a complete knowledge of the subject that would have been very useful to the Committee. Now, this clause as it stands provides that additional grazing land for the purposes of the crofters may be taken by the Land Commission from any existing forest to the extent of two-thirds of the holding, subject to four conditions, with which I shall deal in the course of a few moments. This provision applies mainly to deer forests, because, although the words "grouse moors and for other sporting purpose" are contained in the section, yet the Committee must be aware that, as a general rule, grouse moors and lands used for other sporting purposes are leased as sheep farms. Well, no reasons whatever, so far as I have been able to gather, have been given by Her Majesty's Government for making the distinction between existing leases for sheep farms on the one hand, and existing leases for deer forests on the other. I may observe, in passing, that the food argument, as it is called, will not hold water for a moment. It has been shown over and over again that the diminution of the food supply in the Highlands, owing to the utilization of land in deer forests, is so small as not to be worthy of consideration. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark), speaking on this subject, quoted a quantity of evidence from the Report of the Commission to show that during the past few years a great deal of land has been taken to make deer forests. I admit that a great deal of evidence to that effect may have been given before the Commission; but evidently it was not valuable evidence or worthy of attention, because in their Report the Commissioners state most distinctly that only one reliable case came under their notice, that in that one case only 18 crofters were moved, some to places in the vicinity, some to America, and that the case happened as long as 30 years ago. I think that is an answer to the evidence read out by the hon. Member just now. To justify the distinction between these two kinds of leases, it should have been shown by the Government that deer forests are either, generally speaking, injurious, or, at all events, less beneficial than sheep farms; but this, so far as I have information or experience on the subject, is the reverse of the fact. Even the Lord Advocate himself last night spoke on one occasion at some length to prove that in some parts of the Highlands deer forests are most advantageous, and give a most beneficial use to large tracts of country which could be advantageously put to no other purpose. It is true that this clause is guarded by four limitations; but what is the value of these limitations? I would ask the Committee to examine them for a moment with me. In the first place, the deer forests are to be situated in what is called a crofting parish. What are crofting parishes in the Highlands? They are of the widest possible extent. I know some of them that are as much as 40 miles long, and I believe you will hardly ever find a forest in any of the counties named in the Bill which is not situated, or partly situated, in some crofting parish or another; therefore, the obligation that the deer forest must be within a crofting parish is no safeguard and no practical limitation whatsoever. Then, secondly, the forest must be taken as contiguous or near to land which is in the occupation of crofters, and a great deal depends on the interpretation which is placed upon this limitation. That is a point I desire to see cleared up by Her Majesty's Government before this discussion is closed. Everything, I repeat, depends upon the interpretation which is placed on the words "near to." "Contiguous," of course, is perfectly plain; but distance in the Highlands is a thing regarded in a very different light to what it is in the South. That which would be regarded as a very long walk here would be regarded as a mere step in the Highlands; and I think it extremely probable that grazing land "near to" land occupied already by crofters may, and possibly will, be treated as land that is practically several miles off. If that is so, what I say is that every forest in the Highlands will probably come within the operation of this Bill — that is to say, every forest in that part of the Highlands which is contained within the four corners of this Bill. I am not anxious to unnecessarily delay the passing of the measure, and I do not want, if I can possibly avoid it, to talk out this clause to-night; but I am afraid there is a good deal still to be said on the subject, because there appears to be a wide misapprehension on the part of many Members of the House and on the part of the general public, to the effect that deer forests in the Highlands are an unmitigated evil and mischief at the present time. We are told that there is a great demand for additional grazing land. Assuming that that is the case, and that the new powers conferred by this Bill are freely used—which I suppose they will be—what is going to be the effect? The result will be that wherever a lease—the sporting lease—of a deer forest is interfered with, the landlord will be unable to fulfil the contract which he has entered into with the tenant, and the lease will, of course, be liable to be broken. Supposing that that is the case, and that that happens in many instances throughout the Highlands, all the shootings taken under these terms would be liable to be given up; and if that were done let the Committee consider how serious it would be in the interests of the landlords, and the whole of the population of that part of the country. The hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) pointed out something that the Committee would do well to remember, and it was that the real harvest of the crofting population was to be found in the fishing. In a great measure the hon. Member was right; but I would add this—that instead of one harvest they have two harvests from which they reap, or ought to reap, great profit every year. One is the fishing I admit; but the other is the autumn visits of sporting tenants to the Highlands. [*A laugh.*] An hon. Member laughs; but does he mean to tell me that this does not confer a great benefit upon the population of the Highlands? Think for a moment of the employment that is given; think of the amount of money that is circulated; think of the wages—the increased wages—that many of the people receive in these two or three months in the year, and look forward to during the remaining nine months. It is not, allow me to observe, that whilst the sporting tenants are in the Highlands for the three months that so much benefit accrues to the crofters; but it is undoubtedly the fact—and I challenge denial—that an enormous amount of employment is given throughout the greater portion of the year in consequence of the establishment of shooting lodges all over the Highlands. How many men are employed either in the making or repair of roads, or of paths, or in various other matters of that kind in the forests? And when I ask that question I am dealing with a subject of which I have practical experience of my own; and I do not hesitate to say that if this House thinks fit to adopt legislation by which you will seriously interfere with the shootings of the Highlands, and banish the tenants to a great extent from that part of the country, you will be inflicting on those districts the greatest injury it is in your power to inflict. There is another point of view from which this must be regarded. Think of the loss of revenue that might be suffered by the landlords. I know one county in the Highlands, at this moment, in which the revenue is very large, and of which the sporting tenancies and the shootings provide at least half of the whole. Are you going to deprive the landlords of this great source of revenue without compensation, or without, at all events, that full consideration which this House ought to give to the matter? You must remember that, at the same time that you deprive the landlord of this source of revenue, to a large extent you will be doing a great injustice to the people, especially in those districts of Scotland where the greatest part of the revenue derived by the proprietors is spent on them. The Committee must remember this—that though the sporting tenants may be replaced by the crofters if the Land Commission thinks fit, so far as revenue is concerned, you would not receive from them sufficient to replace one-tenth of the loss which would be suffered by the proprietors. I am aware that there is a good deal of misapprehension on this subject, and still more prejudice, and that anything like an attempt at vindication of the deer forests in Scotland is unpopular in the highest degree. But I do believe this—that it is not so much the use as the abuse of the system which has brought the forests into such bad repute; and, so far as I am aware, the abuse of the system is limited to one notorious case. I do not like to say too much on that point, because all one knows about it is what one sometimes reads in the newspapers, and I have lived long enough to know that probably nine-tenths of what you read in the newspapers on matters of this kind is without foundation in fact. The objections commonly raised to the deer forests have been disposed of by the Royal Commission. First of all, the objection was that the forests were created by evictions. That has been disproved. The second was that the cleared land should be made available for the tenants. Well, I am not sure that that is a plan which would be most favourable to the crofters. On the other hand, although I disapprove of the Amendment intended to bring about the ejection of the sheep farmers in the interest of the crofters, I believe, as a general rule, it will be found that the sheep farms are more valuable.

It being ten minutes before Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress.

Committee to sit again upon *Friday*.

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): With the indulgence of the House, Sir, I wish to say a very few words which, I think, may serve the purpose of giving expression, not merely to my own feeling, but to the general, if not universal, feeling of the House—a feeling of deep concern and regret at the loss we sustained yesterday through the removal by the hand of death of one of our most distinguished Members. Mr. Forster, Sir, was a man worthy to be remembered, both for his public acts and for his personal character. As regards his public acts, undoubtedly he earned for himself a high place among the legislators of this country by the able and successful manner in which, 15 years ago, he carried through this House two measures of very great importance and very great complexity—one of them the Act relating to Education, the other the Act for the establishment of Secret Voting. Perhaps, Sir, in his personal character he had something more original and even more interesting than in his legislative acts. He was a man upon whom there could be no doubt that Nature had laid her hand for the purpose of forming a thoroughly genuine and independent character. It was, indeed, our fate, who had been his Colleagues and had been responsible during years for his acts, to differ from him on more than one important subject after he had ceased to hold Office in the Government of 1880. Whatever those differences were, they never produced in our minds, more than they produced in the minds of the public, the smallest question as to the high integrity of the motives by which Mr. Forster was actuated, and the loftiness of the aims which governed his whole public life. It has been well remarked that although he had ceased to be in direct connection with the Society of Friends, he continued to retain throughout his life that strong and hearty love of freedom and that wakeful philanthropy which all along have been, perhaps, the most marked characteristics of that Religious Society. Sir, it is unquestionable that the late Mr. Forster was a man who never deviated from the straight path he had marked out for himself—a man of unflinching courage, although a lover of peace—a man profoundly attached to the greatness and welfare of his country, and acutely sensible of whatever appertained to its honour — a man who, when he took Office in connection with the Irish Department, although circumstances were not, in all points, favourable to the realization of his desires, undoubtedly did so in a spirit of self-sacrifice and in a spirit of genuine philanthropy, addressed in particular to the case of Ireland—a man, Sir, as to whom, when we consider him all in all, for his abilities and for his moral aims, we cannot form a better wish, for our country or for the House, than that the country may continue to produce many such men, and that many such men may from time to time be elected to sit upon the Benches of the British House of Commons.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS - BEACH (Bristol, W.): After the eloquent tribute which has been paid by the right hon. Gentleman to the distinguished Member of this House whom we have so lately lost, it is unnecessary for me to say anything more than that I am confident that every Member who sits upon this side of the House cordially sympathizes with those words which have fallen from the right hon. Gentleman—that we feel that we have lost in the late Mr. Forster a man of high courage, of great ability, and of sincere devotion to the interests of his country.

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at five minutes after Nine o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 7th April, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Ordered* — *First Reading* — Metropolitan Fire Brigade Expenses * [167]; Friendly Societies (Transmission of Money) * [168]; Metropolitan Police (Stations) * [169].

Second Reading — Church Patronage [4]; Waterworks (Rating) [117], *debate adjourned;* Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act (1855) Amendment * [152].

Second Reading—Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery * [129], *and committed to the Select Committee on* Tithe Rent-Charge (Extraordinary) Amendment [61].

Committee — *Report* — Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment) * [123].

Committee — *Report* — *Third Reading* — Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment * [161], and *passed.*

Report — Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order * [132].

Considered as amended—Third Reading — Poor Relief (Ireland) [155], and *passed.*

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—MEMBERS' SEATS IN THIS HOUSE.

OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): Mr. Speaker, in view of the important debate which is to take place to-morrow, I wish to call attention to the fact that some hon. Members of the House do not seem to have understood the ruling which you laid down the other day as to the securing seats in this House. I have been requested by many hon. Members to ask you to repeat your ruling with regard to Members who come down to the House and place their hats in their seats and then leave the precincts of the House. As I understand it, you have ruled distinctly that a Member wishing to secure his place in the House for the rest of the evening must be present at Prayers and take his seat in the House, and, of course, power is then given to him to retain it. Would you be kind enough to call attention to the Rule which must be obeyed in this matter?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman has rightly understood the ruling which I gave from the Chair some weeks ago. It is a matter of mutual courtesy between Member and Member more than a point of Order; but there is a definite Rule of this House that before a Member can secure a seat he must be present in his seat at Prayer time; and, though by an arrangement of the House that has been repeatedly sanctioned, a Member may place his hat in his seat before Prayer time, it is an essential condition that he should occupy that seat at Prayer time before he can retain it for the rest of the evening. In my opinion the use of duplicate hats are a contravention of the Order of the House.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY: Then, Sir, do I understand that a Member placing his hat in a seat before the House meets is not at liberty to leave the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter rather for the hon. Member who has left his hat in a seat to decide for himself. As I have said, the use of duplicate hats is a contravention of the spirit of the Rule.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I wish, Sir, that your ruling in this matter should be as explicit as possible. It is understood that part of the courteous arrangement as to hats includes this—that a Member who places his hat in a particular seat at any hour of the day does not between that time and Prayers leave the precincts of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: I could not lay down a Rule so explicitly as that; but I say that if a Member places his hat in a seat he has a sort of inchoate right to that seat at Prayer time; but he cannot retain his seat for the rest of the evening unless he is present in the seat in which he has placed his hat at Prayer time.

MOTIONS.

IPSWICH WRIT.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of Two Members to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Ipswich, in the room of Henry Wyndham West, esquire, one of Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the Law, and Jesse Collings, esquire, whose Election hath been determined to be void."—(*Mr. Arnold Morley.*)

Mr. BRAND (Gloucester, Stroud): I had hoped that someone more experienced, and with more authority on these matters, would have entered a protest against the Writ for Ipswich being issued to-day. The Report of the Election Judges was not in the hands of Members until Monday. I believe it was read to the House on Friday, but I did not see it upon the Votes of the House, nor, I suppose, did any Member of the House, until Monday. Now, by a Rule, made in the last House, it was resolved that, wherever illegal, or, rather, corrupt, practices prevailed, or, rather, where a candidate or his agents were found guilty of corrupt practices, then two clear days should elapse after Notice before the Writ was moved. Technically, no doubt, my hon. Friend may say that he has actually given two days' Notice; but is it a clear two days' Notice of Motion to the House when the Notice is given on Friday night, or the very day when the Speaker read to the House the Report of the Judges, which Report could only be in the hands of Members on the Monday? I have only read that Report. I have not been able to see the evidence of the trial; but there is no doubt that a considerable number of men have been reported by the Judges guilty of corrupt practices at the election, some having obtained certificates of indemnity and others not. In either case, as the Petition does not claim the seat, it is not possible to say whether, on either side, there was any considerable amount of corruption. At any rate, it was not a pure election; and if this House has any regard for the purity of election we should not be in such great haste to move the issue of a Writ in a case where, although the Judges do not report that corruption has extensively prevailed, yet, from reports in the newspapers of the proceedings at the trial, it is evident that considerable corruption did prevail, and several persons have been reported by the Judges guilty of such. Another argument why this Motion should be deferred, at any rate until the House is in possession of the shorthand writer's notes of the evidence on which the Report of the Judges is based, is found on the Notice of Motion by my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General, which appears among the Notices for today. That Notice follows the Rule in force in the last House of Commons—

"That in all cases where the seat of any Member has been declared void on the ground of corrupt practices, or illegal practices, no Motion for the issue of a new Writ shall be made without two days' previous Notice on the Votes, and that such Notice be considered before Orders of the Day, and Notices of Motion."

I maintain that the Report of the Judges not having been in the hands of Members until Monday morning—as a fact, it did not reach my hands until the evening—it is rather, if I may be allowed to use the term, sharp practice to spring this Motion upon the House at 12 o'clock on Wednesday morning. I hope the House will see that I have adduced some reason why we should be placed in possession of more facts upon which to base a sound judgment in this matter. Therefore, I will move that the debate be adjourned until the shorthand writer's notes of the proceedings at the trial of the Election Petition are in the hands of the House.

Mr. RYLANDS (Burnley): I rise to second that Motion; and I must express my surprise that the Government have proposed, in this hasty manner, the issue of a Writ under circumstances such as were shown to have existed at the late election for the borough of Ipswich. I should like the House to remember that the two late Members of this House who, so far as the evidence has shown, were entirely guiltless of any corrupt practice themselves—who, we have reason to believe, in every way in their power discouraged corrupt practices—yet being absolutely innocent they have been—and properly—unseated, because a certain amount of corruption was committed by people connected with the borough of Ipswich. And let the House remember Ipswich has not a very clean record, and that it just escaped losing one Member by the accidental fact that the borough had a few hundred above the stipulated limit of 50,000 population. We have reason to believe from what has appeared, so far as we can judge, that corruption did extend much further than the actual cases proved before the Judges; because hon. Members know very well that in these cases, where the seat is not claimed by the Petition, and where one or two cases have been discovered which will clearly unseat the Member, it is in the interest, on various grounds, of both parties to keep back any evidence that might still further incriminate the borough. But I observed that in the course of the evidence before the Judges there was a statement that before the trial of this Election Petition, at a recent municipal contest at Ipswich, at least in one ward, there was a very large amount of corruption. The case is so suspicious that it appears to me that the House ought to have full details of all the facts that appeared before the Election Judges, that we may carefully consider them with a view of deciding what is the proper course to take. Had general corruption been reported, no doubt there would have been a Commission. There is an intermediate course to take, and that is, where sufficient ground is shown, to suspend the issue of a Writ for a certain length of time, to mark the sense of the House that the Members unseated are not the only parties that deserve censure. I think in such cases as this of Ipswich, where a taint of corruption is shown, it should be rooted out. You do not root it out simply by unseating innocent men. What you have to do is to show that the constituency in which this plague spot exists must expect to have it marked by an expression of the opinion of the House. I do not wish to rest what I have to say on this point upon the report in *The Times* merely; and, therefore, I say the House of Commons ought never to issue a Writ in such a case until the House has the shorthand writer's notes of the evidence at the trial, and has had an opportunity of considering whether, beyond the personal effect of the Judges' decision unseating the Members, there should be a wider element introduced—the consideration whether the House would be justified in marking its sense of the conduct of a constituency by refusing it for some time to come the opportunity of representation in the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Brand.*)

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I hope the House will delay the issue of this Writ. I feel strongly on the subject, because in 1881 I had the misfortune to lose my own seat, owing to persons acting in every sense contrary to all my wishes, and every instruction that could be given by myself or my friends. Their action caused the loss of the election, and I feel quite confident that one of the most effective means of preventing corruption in boroughs is to show that the issue is not merely the narrow one between the Member and the Petitioners, but a broader one affecting the whole constituency. The Petition, according to the Form of the House —I think somewhat unfortunately— assumes the character of a mere trial at law between the parties; but what really is on trial in the Petition is the character of the whole constituency, and I believe by deferring the issue of the Writ for a short time you will bring home to the whole of that constituency the fact that the conduct of any individual, or any group of individuals, does not affect the candidate alone, but largely affects the character, the reputation, and the power of the constituency; and I believe if we desire to have purity in election to this House it is only by making victims of innocent men here or there, on whatever side of the House they may sit, that will secure it. It must be by the action of the House bringing home to the heart, the mind, the conscience, and the judgment of the entire constituency that these offences are crimes of a grave character, and must be dealt with as such. It is rare sport, it is a fine thing to bring a vindictive Petition to injure an innocent man; but if the entire constituency feels that conduct like this brings penalties on every voter in the town, then, I venture to say, corrupt men will become pure, and careless, reckless men will find the necessity for caution. I am glad to have so early an opportunity of expressing my opinion on the subject. I do hope the House of Commons will deal in a more stern spirit when circumstances of the kind occur, and thus do much to accomplish that purity of election which every Member of the House, whatever may be his political opinions, must determine to secure in the future.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): The hon. Member who has just sat down spoke with much energy, mainly because it was his misfortune to be unseated himself.

MR. F. S. POWELL: Not mainly.

MR. CHILDERS: Well, primarily that was the reason he put forward, and we may therefore, perhaps, discount the value of his speech in the present case. I will say no more on his speech; but the question is whether this Writ should or should not issue now. In the first place, let me say the case of Ipswich was precisely analogous to that of Norwich. In each case the Judges reported that the Members were unseated by corrupt practices on the part of their agents, and in each case 14 persons were scheduled for corrupt or illegal practices. In the case of Norwich no one objected to the immediate issue of the Writ, and without Notice it was moved and issued in the usual way. The House took no action in opposition. That was in respect to a seat which had been held by a Gentleman sitting on the other side; but we took no exception to the issue of the Writ. But what happens now in the case of Ipswich? Though the same number of persons are mentioned in both cases as guilty of corrupt or illegal practices, when it becomes a question of moving for the issue of the Writ for Ipswich the Government takes the course of not making a Motion at once, but gave two days' Notice; and my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General at the same time places on the Paper a Notice of Motion, in spite of the issue of the Writ for Norwich, that the two days' Notice shall be given which have been given on former occasions. What is it that my hon. Friends now propose should be done? They propose that the House should take Ipswich out of the usual category, and defer the issue of the Writ for an indefinite period. Now, one reason assigned by my hon. Friend (Mr. Rylands) is no argument at all, and I am surprised he should use it. It is that Ipswich is only just over the line laid down in the last Parliament as dividing the boroughs sending one from those returning two Members. That really has nothing whatever to do with the issue of the Writ. But he went on to declare that corrupt practices extensively prevailed at the recent election at Ipswich, and the reason for his belief was the newspaper reports; but the Judges who presided at the trial of the Petition stated most distinctly they had no reason to believe corrupt practices extensively prevailed in the borough; and surely the judgment so clearly pronounced by Judges who knew the circumstances of the case, who were present in the borough, and had all the evidence before them that could be produced, is much more valuable than the impression of my hon. Friend, derived as it is from the reading of one or more newspaper reports. If the Judges had decided that considerable corruption had prevailed, the House would have had to consider whether further steps should not be taken. But here is a case in which they state that they have no reason to believe that general corruption had prevailed, and yet my hon. Friend proposes to override that distinct opinion of the Judges, and to mete out to Ipswich a different measure from that which was meted out to Norwich, and that which Parliament has been accustomed to mete out to boroughs under similar circumstances. My hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury does not adopt the course that was taken in the case of the Norwich Writ, but gives the customary two days' Notice. Under these circumstances, I hope the House will deal with the case as it dealt with the case of Norwich.

MR. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): While I agree with the right hon. Gentleman, I admit, with the hon. Member opposite, that there is something to be said about there being a suspicious case. But hon. Members should remember that not only has there been a judicial inquiry and a Report that there is no reason to believe that general corruption has prevailed, but we have now this additional safeguard—that the Public Prosecutor is represented, who takes care that no opportunity shall be given by collusion between the parties to keep out of sight anything that ought to be brought forward. I understand that the usual two days' Notice have been given of the intention to move for this Writ; but the hon. Member who moved the Amendment wants to go very much beyond the practice of any former Parliament in this matter, and call upon the House to suspend the issue of the Writ until all the evidence is before us. I think that is going too far. The two days' Notice have been given; therefore, there is no reason, in my opinion, why the Motion should not be agreed to.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I trust the House will not delay the issue of the Writ. The reasons assigned for delay ought not to have any weight. As far as I can see, the Government have anticipated that the House would renew the Sessional Order relating to the two days' Notice, and have acted as though that Order really appeared on the Votes. They have not taken advantage of the fact that the Order has not yet been passed, as was done in the case of the Norwich Writ, but they have given the full two days' Notice; and if the hon. Member for Stroud had not seen, in the Papers delivered to Members, the Report of the Judges, and was not in his place when it was read, it simply meant that he had not paid that attention which he ought to have done to the ordinary Business of the House. Had it not been for the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down I should have thought that there had been a reason omitted by those who oppose the issue of the Writ which ought to be considered. Their sympathies for purity of election were not quickened in the case of the Norwich Writ because the vote could be reckoned on in a particular direction. But it is possible that, in the case of Ipswich, events may happen which may make two votes of considerable importance; and hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House who, as we know, have had experience of corrupt practices in boroughs now rise to postpone the Writ, perhaps for other reasons than those they have placed before the House.

Sir JOHN R. MOWBRAY (Oxford University): There appears to be a wonderful accord between the two Front Benches and Gentlemen below the Gangway; and suspicion is raised as to the motive that induced my hon. Friend below me to speak with the energy he did, he having had an unfortunate experience. But as an independent Member of the House I protest against the hurry in the issue of this Writ; and if I want an argument I find a conclusive one in what has been said by the Home Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman raised a parallel between this case and Norwich; but do we who have read the newspaper reports not know that the Judges pronounced this a very hard case, and that the inquiry was very prolonged, and dealt with a great many cases? The distinction between the two is so marked that I think the demand of my hon. Friend (Mr. Brand) is a just one. It is only a matter of a few days, and we shall be in possession of something more than the Judges' Report. My impression is that the Notice relating to the Writ is always given after the House has been put in possession of something more than the Report of the Judges. The general practice is that, if there is no particular interest arising out of it, time is allowed to elapse in order that the House may become aware of all the circumstances. The Writ has been moved for in hot haste before the Attorney General's Motion which referred to the two days' Notice, and which is on the Paper, has been considered and agreed to. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) seems to think that we oppose the issue of the Writ because two Members may be returned to support the Government. I know nothing about that. I have had no communication with the Whips, and I do not know which side the two Members who may be returned will take; but I contend that no case has been made out for the immediate issue of the Writ. It may be convenient for election agents on both sides to smother the matter up, and get it out of the way as quickly as possible; but if in this House we look to purity of election we should support the Amendment to defer the issue of the Writ.

Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): I can see no objection to the issue of the Writ; and I do not see that the Motion has in any sense been sprung upon the House. The hon. Gentleman the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury informed me last week that he intended to move for the Writ on Monday; and when I pointed out that there was considerable objection to that course being taken, the hon. Gentleman immediately said he would give Notice for it for Wednesday. As to the Norwich Writ, I followed the precedent set by the hon. Gentleman in moving for the Barrow Writ without Notice to the House; but there was no intention to spring it upon the other side, and the usual 24 hours' Notice in writing was given by me to the Secretary to the Treasury. I repeat that I see no objection to the Writ being moved for; and I may point out that the hon. Gentleman gave full Notice, so far as we are concerned on the Opposition side of the House, that he intended to move it to-day.

Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I trust this matter will not be pressed to a division. What is the object of the Motion? Simply that the issue of the Writ shall be delayed for two days, and the result of that delay would only issue in one of two directions—either delay for the sake of delay, for the purpose of showing the people of Ipswich that this House disapproves of their conduct, or with the view of ultimately disfranchising the borough. Now, I do not suppose that any hon. Member desires the latter course, although I remember the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge, at the time of the discussion of the Redistribution Bill, did move that the number of Representatives should be reduced to one. But I take it the object of the delay is to show the people of Ipswich that the House wishes to make a determined step in favour of purity of election. To delay the Writ for that purpose would be to inflict a childish punishment. What does it come to? Simply this—that because an injustice has been inflicted on two innocent men, who did everything in their power to secure that the election should be conducted in a pure way, and had to suffer through the action of others, you would inflict another injustice on the great bulk of the inhabitants of Ipswich, who would suffer for the sins of a small number. I have derived my information from the reports in the local papers, and my impression is exactly that made on the minds of the Judges, and quoted by the Home Secretary, that although there have been some insignificant instances of corruption among a few individuals, yet there was no such widespread corruption as to justify the disfranchisement of the borough, or delay the issue of the Writ.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I regret that this matter has been brought before the notice of the House. I had hoped that the little misfortune which has happened to one of the Members of Her Majesty's Government would have been smothered up, hidden away, and forgotten. This course has not been adoped, however, by the hon. Member's own Friends, and, the question of the purity of the Ipswich Election having been raised in the House, it is impossible for hon. Members to overlook it. The hon. Member who has just spoken has had the advantage of reading the evidence as reported in the local newspapers; and although he might be perfectly acquainted with all the facts of the case, the House generally is considering the question on insufficient information. All we ask, therefore, is that before the Writ is issued this necessary information should be provided in the shape of the shorthand writer's notes. Some very remarkable and awkward statements have appeared in *The Times* about this election, which I should like to know something more about. Does the right hon. Gentleman recollect the bogus telegram said to have been written by the hon. Member who was lately a Colleague of his? It was one of the most discreditable things that had ever occurred in any election. I am anxious to have in my hands the shorthand writer's notes, in order that I may be able to form an opinion on the matter. I agree with the hon. Member for Northampton that it is most important at the present time to obtain the opinion of the constituencies. This is the only consideration which causes me to hesitate in opposing the issue of the Writ. I desire to hear what the constituencies have to say at the present time. I should like them to have the fullest possible opportunity of declaring their opinion, and this is the only ground why I am inclined to support the issue of the Writ. But as the matter has been brought forward in the form it has assumed before the House, and as the House has shown, especially as far as the two Front Benches are concerned, which I very much regret, no desire to maintain purity of election, I shall certainly give my vote in favour of its postponement.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 16; Noes 175: Majority 159.—(Div. List, No. 69.)

Original Question put.

Ordered, That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of Two Members to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Ipswich, in the room of Henry Wyndham West, esquire, one of Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the Law, and Jesse Collings, esquire, whose election hath been determined to be void.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL.—[Bill 4.]

(*Mr. Rylands, Mr. Leatham, Mr. Henry Fowler, Mr. Brinton.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. LEATHAM (Huddersfield): Mr. Speaker—Sir, I can hardly rise to move the second reading of this Bill without congratulating my hon. Friends whose names are upon the back of it, and, indeed, all who condemn the traffic in livings, upon the progress which this question has made in public opinion. Those of us who have devoted a good deal of attention to this question for many years, and have made efforts to rouse and fix the public conscience with regard to it, may, I think, find a good deal of gratification in the fact that it has at last entered upon a stage where the main facts upon which we have insisted are admitted, and there is no great difference of opinion with regard to the remedies to be applied. I remember that so lately as 1884, when this Bill was last before the House, I thought it still necessary to meet the contention of no less a Church Reformer than the Bishop of Peterborough, who had asserted that a wide distinction in principle was to be drawn between the sale of an advowson and the sale of a next presentation. It is a great satisfaction to me to find, from his Lordship's contribution to a recent number of *The National Review*, that the right rev. Prelate is now of opinion that it is as necessary to stop the sale of advowsons as it is that of next presentations. In fact, in nine cases out of ten, no moral distinction whatever can be drawn between the sale of an advowson and of a next presentation; because, in nine cases out of ten, the motive of the purchaser is the same in either case—he buys the advowson with an eye to the next presentation and to a particular nominee; while the motive of the vendor in either case is identical—namely, to turn his trust into money. And it is a fortunate circumstance that this moral distinction cannot be drawn, otherwise we should despair of putting an end to the traffic, which has always been chiefly a traffic not in next presentations, but in advowsons. Now, Sir, I do not think it necessary any longer to take up the time of the House by a recapitulation of the main facts upon which this whole proposal is based—they are universally admitted—I mean the magnitude and rascality of the traffic; its demoralizing effect upon both patrons and clergy, and especially upon those who are both clergymen and patrons; the outrage upon congregations; the prodigious scandal; and the injury to the interests of the Church and of religion itself. Although we had all these facts at our command 12 or 13 years ago, we approached the consideration of this question at that time under this crushing disadvantage—that it appeared to be regarded with indifference by Churchmen themselves. In view of that apparent apathy on the one hand, and these facts on the other, I think any Church Reformer might have been excused if he arrived at the conclusion—which I confess I did—that the traffic in livings was so built into the system of an Establishment that they must both stand or fall together. So long as I leant to that opinion I received the enthusiastic support of hon. Friends who sit near me, and who have distinguished themselves by their hostility to the principle of an Establishment. But now that I am able to take a more cheerful view, and to propose amendments of the law which will, I hope, put an end to these scandalous proceedings, I do not find nearly so much enthusiasm among my hon. Friends; indeed, when the Bill was last under discussion, some of them went the length of voting against it. Now, my hon. Friends must forgive me when I say that I have some difficulty in understanding their position. They say that they cannot pose as Church Reformers. Well, but surely they do not desire that the Church should remain as full as possible of abuses, in order that it may be brought down by the very weight of the abuses itself. ["No, no!"] My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth) indignantly says "No!" But the human conscience is wonderfully subtle; and when we dislike an Institution we easily find excellent reasons for refusing to do it any good. Sir, I think that it is impossible for any Member of Parliament thus to shirk the responsibilities which devolve upon him at his election. When he is returned to this House he accepts the charge of all the Public Institutions in the country, whether he thinks well of them or not. He may desire to see some of them removed, and he is at liberty to urge their removal from his place in Parliament; but so long as they exist he is bound to see that they are made as beneficent, or as innocuous, as possible. When, therefore, Church Reforms are pressed upon us for acceptance or rejection, it is impossible for us to stand aside and say—"I am a Reformer in everything except upon ecclesiastical questions; I am a Member of Parliament in every sense, except so far as relates to my share in the control of the State's great provision for religion." You cannot cut and carve your duties in that fashion. You must either accept them all, and discharge them all, or renounce them all; and it is on this ground, because hon. Gentlemen admit that the Bill before the House will augment the usefulness of the Church, or, at any rate, if they will have it so, abate the harm which it is doing, that I claim for it the support of my hon. Friends. And now, Sir, what is this Bill? It is really a Bill to prohibit the marketing of advowsons. It contains, no doubt, clauses for other purposes; but they are all subordinate to that part of the Bill which deals with advowsons. Resignation bonds are done away with, the sale of next presentations is prohibited, and donatives are turned into presentative benefices; but these are provisions which must form part of any Bill for the amendment of the Patronage Laws, and there is no reason to believe that they will be resisted by anyone. They find a place in this Bill as a matter of course; and I shall not take up the time of the House in discussing them. Let us rather discuss the Bill itself, which is only an important measure at all in so far as it deals with advowsons. Now, the House is aware that this question has not reached its present, which I believe to be its final stage, without a good deal of discussion. We had several debates in the two last Parliaments upon the traffic in livings; and it was not until I had tested the opinion of the House by Resolutions that I had the honour of first bringing in this Bill. It was read a second time the year before last by a large majority and referred to a Select Committee, along with the Bill of my right hon. Friend the Member for the Horncastle Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. E. Stanhope). That Committee was a thoroughly representative one. It consisted of 17 Members; it was presided over by my right hon. Friend—whose loss we all so much deplore—the late Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster), and it went very patiently through both Bills, with this result—that it reported in favour of all their main provisions. That portion of the Bill of my right hon. Friend which I may term distinctive has been embodied, I believe, in the measure which has been introduced in "another place" by the Archbishops. Otherwise, with the full consent of my right hon. Friend, it would have been included in this Bill; for my right hon. Friend and myself are in no kind of way antagonistic in our proposals. I think that my right hon. Friend will allow me to say that we have each accepted each other's Bills; and if, in the exercise of his discretion, he should move what is distinctive of his Bill in the form of clauses in Committee I shall certainly not offer any opposition. Now, though the Select Committee reported in favour of all the main provisions of my Bill as it stood in 1884, it naturally suggested Amendments in matters of detail, all of which are to be found in the Bill now before the House, with one solitary exception, to which I will refer immediately. The Bill provides that henceforth all sales of advowsons shall be void, unless the sale be made to some person possessing or acquiring in the parish itself, or an adjoining parish, or in both, property of an equal annual value with that of the benefice, or to some public patron or set of trustees not having power of sale, or to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty under the provisions of the Bill. The Bill, therefore, absolutely puts an end to what is usually called the traffic in livings, with all its clandestine proceedings, touting agents, and so forth; but it does not prevent an advowson from passing with an estate by sale; it does not prevent a patron who is bent upon selling his advowson, or compelled to do so, from meeting with a purchaser; indeed, it rather facilitates such sales, because it provides a purchaser who must buy, in the person of Queen Anne's Bounty, only it limits the amount to be paid by the Board to a maximum of five years' purchase of the value of the living, Queen Anne's Bounty either paying for the advowson outright from moneys at their disposal, or recouping themselves by a charge to be levied on the living, and spread over a number of years, the charge to take effect after the next vacancy. I said, a moment ago, that there was one recommendation of the Committee which I was unable to adopt. It relates to the disposal of the patronage of livings so bought. As the Bill originally stood, this was to go to the Crown. The Committee proposed that it should go to Patronage Boards, to be created in every diocese. Unfortunately, no such Boards are at present in existence. I think that it is no part of our duty, in bringing in a Bill to prohibit the traffic in livings, to provide these Boards; but that their creation should have an Act of Parliament to itself, especially as there appears to be no small difference of opinion as to what the constitution of these Boards should be. But we are most anxious, as far as possible, to meet the wishes of the Committee, one of the recommendations of which was that the churchwardens of the parish, for the time being, should be associated with the Patronage Board in the presentation to the living. What we, therefore, propose is that, pending the creation of such Boards, the patronage should rest with the Ordinary and the churchwardens of the parish. We think that we shall thus arrive at a representation of parish opinion on the one hand, and of ecclesiastical preferences and experience upon the other. Now, there are one or two points in this scheme with regard to which I think the House will expect a word of explanation. One is why Queen Anne's Bounty has been selected as the medium for these transactions. This is in consequence of their being actually engaged in many analogous transactions, and also of the very detailed and explicit evidence given by Mr. Aston, the Treasurer and Secretary, before the Lords' Committee on Patronage. Mr. Aston stated very fully why he thought the Board perfectly well qualified to undertake transactions of this character; and I must beg to refer hon. Members to the evidence itself. The only other point which I think it is necessary for me to explain is the limitation of compensation to patrons selling to Queen Anne's Bounty to a sum not exceeding five years' net revenue of the benefice. I can readily understand that some little difference of opinion may arise as to the propriety of this exact figure—indeed, there was some difference of opinion in the Committee—but I think that a little consideration will convince the House that in fixing five years we are not far beside the mark. The sum which is paid for an advowson now, with immediate possession, in evasion of the law, is sometimes, perhaps, as much as 10 years' net annual value. But, then, a sale cannot always be effected, or anything like it; and the money value of advowsons is enormously and improperly enhanced by our present mode of dealing with them. Not only is the market an open market, no regard whatever being had to the claims and wishes of congregations, but the advowson is hawked about and advertised by touting agents, some of whom candidly admit that the great bulk of these transactions are absolutely illegal. The sum asked for an advowson, then, is enhanced by stripping the sale of all the conditions which would surround it if the thing sold were regarded as it ought to be—as a trust, with privileges attached; while, on the other hand, the net sum receivable by patrons is diminished by the expenses of sale and the agent's charges, among which we must reckon hush money, for people will not take part in illegal and, perhaps, criminal transactions without its being made well worth their while to do so. Indeed, some of these agents have been shown to be convicted criminals themselves, who defy the law, for there is no class of business carried on anywhere which is more shameless than the traffic in livings; and in assessing the value of an advowson it is no part of our duty to take as our standard what a thing may fetch when a total disregard of what is right and legal is brought to bear to raise the price. Sir, I wish that the circumstances of the case would permit of my asking the House to put an end, once and for ever, to the sale of a spiritual trust. Unfortunately, this is impossible. For centuries livings have been sold like sheep. They have entered into every kind of covenant and every kind of settlement. They have been mortgaged again and again. The lawyers have treated them as so much saleable property; but all along an inalienable condition has attached to them—they have never altogether lost their character as spiritual trusts. One object of this Bill is to attempt to assign their relative values to these conflicting elements, to define how much is still the property of the public, and how much has practically lapsed into the pocket of the trustee, and, in cases in which the trustee demands as much as he can get, by paying off the trustee for ever to purify the trust. Now, the Bill practically declares that an advowson is as much a spiritual trust as it is a marketable privilege. In the worst of times there has been always enough in the Statute Book to warn these speculators that the public conscience might, at any moment, awake and demand the restitution of much of that for which they have paid. The law has never permitted the sale of a vacant benefice. Since the time of Queen Anne it has never permitted a clerk to purchase a next presentation for himself. If patronage were mere property these limitations would never have existed; and in offering the selling patron, now that the public conscience is awake, half the maximum value of his advowson, we are, in my opinion, dealing fairly and justly by him, and are making a real and large concession to that principle of our legislation which deals generously with those whom a higher phase of public morality overtakes and a sterner sense of duty and of decency finds in its path. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Leatham.*)

Mr. RAIKES (Cambridge University) said, he felt bound to express his acknowledgment of the moderate and temperate speech in which the hon. Member had moved the second reading of this Bill. He was sure that if other Gentlemen who held the same views as to Church Establishment would adopt the same tone in dealing with Church questions they would be likely to arrive at a much easier and better solution of them in that House than they were in former years. He thought, on the whole, having regard to the peculiar nature of an advowson, that the limitations proposed in this Bill were reasonable and safe. An advowson, doubtless, was to be regarded as a spiritual trust; but it had also something of the nature of property, and it was from this mixed character that difficulties had arisen—from the combination of the character of a property and a spiritual trust. It was impossible, therefore, to deal with this question from any point of view which regarded it solely from one of these standpoints. Although he considered the limitations reasonable which were imposed upon the sale of advowsons by this Bill, he was bound to confess that his objections had not been removed to the second part of the Bill, which dealt with the sale of next presentations. He believed that he was in a minority in expressing the opinion; but he did not himself think that it was desirable to put an end to the transferability of next presentations, and he was convinced that it was impossible. He felt satisfied that whatever provision was made against the practice, the ingenuity of the lawyers would enable them to get round it. As long as one person had a commodity of which he wished to dispose and which another person wished to get, he did not believe that it was in the power of any Act of Parliament to absolutely prohibit such a thing. It appeared to him that supposing that this Bill became law there would be nothing to prevent the parties effecting their object by means of a fictitious loan, to be repaid the day after the presentee's induction by the person who had practically purchased the presentation. In his opinion what was wanted in regard to the sale of next presentations was rather regulation than complete prohibition, such, for instance, as the establishment of a registry, and also the conferring of certain powers upon the Bishop of the diocese to interfere in such transactions as might appear to him to be unsatisfactory. He was entirely in favour of putting an end to the scandals of the present system of dealing with next presentations, such as their sale by action, and their being advertised in the newspapers; but he could not see why certain persons having the right of conferring the next presentation should not be allowed to transfer it where the person to whom it was granted was approved of by the Bishop. He was anxious to put the sale of next presentations under restriction and regulation; but he could not see that the cause of the Church would be advanced by establishing a hard-and-fast line stereotyping the existing system of patronage, and not allowing to it that ease and elasticity which had hitherto, in no small degree, conduced to its popularity. To take the case of a purchaser. In this country there was a large class of men who had risen from the middle classes and acquired large fortunes, and who were anxious in every way to make a good use of their wealth. Such men, it might be, had sons whom they wished to place in the Church. Accordingly they looked out to obtain the next presentation to some living whereby the young man might be enabled to enter upon a beneficial and successful career. Such men could not do so unless, by some means or other, they were enabled to acquire a next presentation. Now, the Bill proposed to prevent that sort of transaction. If the House was going in future to prevent persons coming into the Church who were possessed of private fortunes, it would deprive many a parish of advantages derived from the fact that the vicar or rector was a person with private means which he was willing to spend for the benefit of his parish. He could not but think that the House would do well to pause before accepting, in deference to a cry however well-meaning, the total prohibition which the Bill proposed upon the sale of next presentations; and, for himself, he would endeavour to introduce clauses in the direction he had indicated. Moreover, he had grave objections to the provision enabling the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, if they should become the purchasers, to charge the price paid to the patron on the revenues of the parish. He should strenuously resist that proposal. He could conceive nothing more inconsistent with what had been defined as the spiritual view of the question than that the patron should be recouped out of the scanty income of the incumbent, and out of the provision for the spiritual wants of a parish. If that clause was retained, it would militate very seriously against the success of the measure. While reserving a more detailed examination of the Bill to a later stage, he found it impossible to assent, without a protest, to the second reading. He was convinced that the more the question was looked at the more the House would appreciate how far it had been clouded by much prejudice, much misrepresentation, and much confusion of thought existing out-of-doors. He hoped, however, that by means of some more carefully considered measure some steps would be taken to abate an evil which all deplored.

Mr. RYLANDS (Burnley) said, he must confess that down to a few years ago he had held the opinion, still held by many Gentlemen in the House, that the House of Commons was not a desirable Body to deal with questions connected with the constitution and organization of the Church. On that ground he had rather been indisposed to join in any action which would seem to imply that, in the judgment of the House, the Church itself was not the best Body to deal with all such questions. But he had altered his opinion. He was unable any longer to take the responsibility of resisting measures which would have the effect of extending the usefulness of that great Religious Body in the country, because of the idea that if they refused to reform the Church they would force on the question of its Disestablishment. When the matter was carefully looked into, no hon. Gentleman could feel that, occupying the position of a Member of

Parliament, he could evade the responsibility which pressed upon him in connection with the Church. The Disestablishment of the Church might be more or less remote. There was no doubt it was in the air; but whenever it came it would produce a great wrench in the social arrangements of the country. He would, therefore, urge upon Churchmen as well as Dissenters that, in view of that great change which he believed would come, it was the interest both of members of the Church and of those in favour of Disestablishment to promote the reform of the Church, so that when the change did come it would produce the least possible friction and division among the different classes of the community. The Church, since it could not reform itself, was bound to come to the House of Commons. He could not imagine a greater bondage than that a great spiritual Body should be fastened in bondage under laws which it did not make, and which it could not improve or reform. It was a spiritual Body in a cast-iron frame which it could not get rid of. It being generally admitted, in the Church and out, that the sale of livings was a gross scandal, he asked whether Dissenters had a right to refuse reform in that direction, and to decline to put a stop to a system which was offensive to the community, which interfered with the spiritual life of the Church, and which tended to bring discredit on religion? With regard to the evil there was a general consensus of opinion. He spoke as a Churchman, but his sympathies were by no means confined to the Church. He might say that he was a Churchman among Nonconformists and a Nonconformist among Churchmen. Both Nonconformists and Churchmen ought to look with favour on any measures, so long as the Church was established, which could increase its efficiency and usefulness. He was glad that his right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Raikes) had no idea of dividing the House against the Bill, although he objected to some of its provisions. The Bill was drawn almost entirely on the lines of the recommendations of the Select Committee of 1884, which, although it embraced every shade of opinion, was almost unanimous in its general conclusions. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to approve, on the whole, the provisions of the Bill regarding advowsons, though he took exception to the regulations respecting the number of years' purchase and the instalments and term within which the purchase money was to be paid. But it was impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that the sale of advowsons was now carried on in circumstances widely different from those which formerly prevailed. The public conscience had been touched. People could not go into this nefarious traffic without feeling that their hands were not clean; and at the sale of presentations there was a reduction of value. Many persons wholly disapproved the system. Some would say that no compensation at all ought to be paid, just as there was a protest against the payment of over-regulation prices for commissions in the Army. But they ought to deal with the question as a fact, and deal reasonably with the existing state of things. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Raikes) seemed to think there was something almost un-Christian in that the instalments should be made chargeable on the benefice; but he (Mr. Rylands) could not see the point of that objection. The right hon. Gentleman also said that they could not enforce a law to prevent the sale of next presentations, for the ingenuity of lawyers could always devise a means whereby when a man had something which he wanted to sell, and which another was willing to buy, the transaction could be carried through. He recognized the difficulty; but he still believed that if they passed a law absolutely stopping next presentations, the immediate effect would be that they would have no more scandalous sales by auction or advertisements in papers, while such legislation would be a serious impediment to sales by private arrangement, because the parties engaging in such transactions would do so in the full knowledge that these transactions had been declared illegal. No doubt, in any case, the wisdom of Parliament would find means of preventing such an abuse. He was altogether in favour of putting a check on the imposition of unsuitable clergymen upon a parish, and this purpose the Bill would in a considerable degree effect; and he hoped, therefore, that the Bill would meet with the concurrence of the House.

Mr. J. G. HUBBARD (London), who had the following Amendment on the Paper:—

> "That no measure for the Amendment of the exercise of Church Patronage can be satisfactory which does not require in every diocese a registry of advowsons in which every advowson must be registered, and a Board of Patronage empowered to buy advowsons and sell them to approved purchasers, to accept and acquire the patronage of existing benefices, and receive benefactions to assist poor benefices and endow new ones, prohibit the sale of future advowsons except to Diocesan Boards, empower the Bishop to reject a presentee less than three years in priests' orders, or more than seventy years of age, or disqualified by moral delinquency, by bodily or mental infirmity, who is incumbered by debt, or unprovided with sufficient satisfactory testimonials, and provide time to the parishioners to submit objections to the Bishop,"

said, he had listened with great interest to the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) and the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands), and hoped that the wise and patriotic sentiments which they had expressed would be adopted generally on the Benches opposite. He had no objection to Nonconformists taking part in the discussion of Church questions, as the Church was a National Institution and in intimate connection with the Crown. He thanked the hon. Member for Huddersfield for the part he had taken in bringing this question before the House. He could not agree, however, with the hon. Member for Burnley that the Bill was altogether founded on the recommendations of the Committee of 1884. That description would better apply to the Bill of the right hon. Member for the Horncastle Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Stanhope). The first Bill on the subject was introduced by the Bishop of Peterborough. That Bill, however, failed to obtain the support of Gentlemen opposite, and was thrown out. If it had been passed there would not have been any necessity to legislate further for the reform of the abuses of the Church. He was sorry to find the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Raikes) threw the sale of advowsons and of next presentations into the same category. There was a marked distinction between the two processes. When a patron sold a presentation, he derived from that exercise of his trust a pecuniary advantage; and the purchaser, if directly or indirectly the next presentee, was enabled to apply the revenue of the benefice to the payment of the price. When a patron sold the advowson he transferred the trust to another patron, who might exercise it equally well, the revenue remaining unaffected. He strongly objected to the charge proposed to be laid on the living in order to repay the price of the advowson. It would be an injury to the clergyman and to the parish that such an abrasion of its revenues should be permitted. No doubt advowsons might be bought and sold for the same purposes as next presentations usually were; but that would be an abuse of the law; and all laws were subject to abuse and evasion. He did not, therefore, think that the sale of advowsons should be absolutely prohibited. Patrons might die, and advowsons be sold with the rest of the property, and there must be a patron for every living. The hon. Member for Huddersfield proposed that Queen Anne's Bounty should in general be made the patron of livings. But he did not think that the Queen Anne's Bounty Commissioners would be suitable patrons, as they were a very miscellaneous body, with no fixed or permanent character. It would not be difficult to appoint Diocesan Boards as the patrons of livings in each diocese. Suitable men would easily be found conversant with the requirements of each locality. With respect to the sale of advowsons, it was said that the present holders were, as a body, men of unimpeachable character, and that many of them were clergymen. No doubt that was so; and he would, therefore, be prepared to allow them to be sold once, and when that sale had been effected to bring the advowson fully under the provisions of the Act. In regard to the financial question, he differed from his hon. Friend the Member for Burnley, and considered that the financial question was a large one, and that the incumbrance on the living would be a heavy one, even if the instalments were to extend over 30 years. For instance, a living of £300 a-year, if bought of the patron at five years' purchase, would cost £1,500; and to raise that price upon the living would require an annual charge of £50 a-year. The views which he (Mr. Hubbard) had placed before the House had met with so favourable a reception, that he was now enabled to withdraw the Amendment which he had proposed.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr.

Childers) (Edinburgh, S.) said, he had listened with great interest to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City (Mr. Hubbard). Although he did not oppose the second reading, a great deal would have to be said on its future stages. The financial question was undoubtedly extremely difficult. He was speaking entirely for himself, as the question of Church Reform was one on which it was not likely that the Government, in the present Session, would have any proposals to make. He was, therefore, speaking on his own personal responsibility only. The question of the sale of advowsons and next presentations was only a small part of the great question of Church Reform, to which, sooner or later, Parliament would have to address itself. He said that without reference to the great question of Disestablishment, on which his opinion was well known. The existing abuses in the Church were patent to everybody who had studied the question; and their reform, especially with regard to the income of the Church, was an extremely difficult one. There was no great difficulty in dealing with the incomes of the Bishops and of the Deans and Chapters. Great improvement in that respect had already been effected, and the incomes of these dignitaries had, to a large extent, been equalized and adjusted in a satisfactory manner. It would be remembered that 50 years ago, while some of the bishoprics were worth £25,000 a-year, others were not worth more than as many hundreds. A like reform had been effected in the case of Deans and Chapters. That reform was comparatively easy, because the appointments lay either with the Crown, or, in the case of Canonries, sometimes with the Bishops; whereas other ecclesiastical patronage was in many different hands. How was it that the living in one parish, containing only a few hundred inhabitants, was worth £2,000 a-year, while the living in another, containing as many thousand inhabitants, was worth only £200? How was it that such a state of things had been rendered possible? The reason was to be sought in the fact that the patronage of large livings was pecuniarily valuable, and that changes in the constitution of such livings could not be effected without the consent of the patrons. The result was that as long as the livings of the Church of England, whether advowsons or next presentations, could be sold, a satisfactory state of things could not be brought about. To secure effective reforms the consent of the patrons must be dispensed with; and it could not be dispensed with as long as they retained a valuable pecuniary interest in the livings. The conclusion to be drawn was that the sale of livings ought to be done away with altogether; there was no middle course. A more thorough reform than the Bill would effect was desirable. A good deal of difference of opinion seemed to exist as to the manner in which next presentations and advowsons were to be rendered unsaleable; but, whatever the difference of opinion might be, he trusted that the present discussion was the beginning of a struggle which should end in the complete abolition of the sale of livings—nothing short of that would be satisfactory. The present occasion might be looked upon as the beginning of a struggle like that which ended in the abolition of the system of purchase in the Army. A proper division of the income of the Church would never be assured until the question of the pecuniary value of the right of sale should no longer be a question of interest to the patron. He was anxious to admit that the Bill contained provisions of considerable value—such, for example, as the provision for doing away with resignation bonds, which at present led to great abuses. He did not regard with approval the proposal to charge the compensation payable in respect of a living upon the living itself, for the effect would be to reduce materially for a number of years the incomes derivable from poor livings. He should like to see a system introduced under which it would be possible, equitably and reasonably, to make unsaleable what was now the saleable property of a patron, a certain option being given to him, so that he could not say that he had been unfairly treated by Parliament in respect to his vested interest. He believed that if such a system were established only a small number of patrons would relinquish their patronage, for the great mass of patrons did not look upon the question as a monetary one, and would gladly hold their patronage without the privilege of sale. He should be sorry to see the rights of such patrons as relinquished their patronage transferred to the Ordinary and the churchwardens. The patronage ought to be transferred to those who really represented the parish, as in Scotland under recent legislation. In conclusion, he would say that he felt very strongly on the subject, and he was confident that before long the Legislature must carry out an effective reform with respect to Church temporalities. Though he approved the Bill as a step towards the improvement of the existing state of things, he could not regard it as likely to be final.

Mr. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) said, he regretted that the right hon. Gentleman, while expressing general approval of the Bill, should have said so much that was likely to ruin its chances of passing. Holding that many of the provisions of the measure were highly desirable, he was sorry that the right hon. Gentleman should have put obstacles in the way of its progress. Unlike the Home Secretary, he was not prepared to wait until they were ready to deal with the whole subject of Church Reform before dealing with a reform which was complete in itself. The growth of public opinion on the subject of patronage was remarkable. There was a general agreement that the system of Church patronage ought to be amended, and the members of the Church of England earnestly desired to get rid without delay of abuses which they could not defend. It was very remarkable to notice what the House of Laymen had done on this subject. Though there was nothing from which the general opinion of the clergy upon the matter could be gathered, the House of Laymen had arrived at a general consensus of opinion that steps ought to be taken to deal with it. As regarded the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) and himself there certainly was no jealousy whatever. He had himself been one of those Members who had endeavoured to contribute towards the settlement of the question by introducing Bills on several occasions. The hon. Member had, unfortunately, left out of his Bill a large portion of the recommendations of the Select Committee which had reported on this subject. Those recommendations were practically unanimously carried by that Committee, and he thought it was desirable that they should have been embodied in the hon. Member's Bill. The hon. Member seemed to have forgotten that some time ago that House, with the assent of the House of Lords, had passed a Bill for the abolition of next presentations, and public opinion had greatly advanced since then. With some of the provisions of the Bill he certainly agreed. He thought all would desire to see donatives and resignation bonds done away with; and he believed the House would not be one moment in advance of public opinion if the possibility of selling the right to the next presentation were abolished. As to the question of the sale of advowsons, though he did not admit that the distinction between the sale of an advowson and the next presentation could be maintained, he was anxious that the question should be dealt with, and a large limit put upon their sale. But the difficulties which surrounded the question were quite enough to shipwreck the Bill of a private Member. As to the recommendation that there should be given to patrons, in return for the abandonment of their interests, a certain compensation, he totally failed to understand the nature of that recommendation; but he was bound to say that he concurred altogether with the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary and several speakers on his own side of the House that such compensation ought not to be made a charge upon the living. He earnestly hoped the House would unanimously read the Bill a second time; and he wished to make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman not to be in too great a hurry to take the Committee stage, but that he would wait until they had seen the measure which there was reason to believe would shortly be introduced in the House of Lords. For his part, he desired in Committee to move Amendments embodying certain of the recommendations of the Select Committee to which he had referred; but he should endeavour to act with the hon. Member in carrying a measure which might be practical, and would have the effect of removing a scandal which, in his opinion, was dangerous to the interests of the Church.

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He was very much struck by the contrast between two speeches which had been made on the opposite side of the House—two speeches which appeared to him to indicate a cleavage of opinion on that side of the House, which they knew existed among the friends of the Church, and which was most instructive to those who contemplated this subject from the point of view of Disestablishment. He referred to the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University (Mr. Raikes) and of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London (Mr. Hubbard). He appealed to the House whether the spirit of those two speeches was not almost in diametrical opposition — whether they did not find in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for London a recognition of the spiritual necessities of this matter, which was totally absent from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University? He confessed that a speech of any friend of the Church, made in the tone of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University, left upon his mind a most depressing impression. What did he gather from that speech? He believed that anyone contemplating the position of Church matters at this day, if he had duly considered the tendencies of the time, would agree with him that to approach Church questions in the spirit which was shown in that speech was to doom themselves to the conclusion that the Church of England must go on, for the present at any rate, neither with any certainty that the best abilities of its ministers would be called out and recognized, and brought into play for the good of the community, nor with any certainty that the Church would have the smallest chance of adapting itself to the spiritual needs of the age. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University dropped by accident into a phrase in which a great deal was involved. He was speaking of the not uncommon position of a father who had a living to give away, and who turned his glances upon his sons, in order that he might select one as a recipient of that living; and he imagined that fond parent discovering amongst his children one who might receive the living but for the fact that he was, as the right hon. Gentleman tenderly expressed it, imperfectly qualified to take it. It was a fact well known in the history of this country that these imperfect qualifications had not, as a rule, stood in the way of appointments to the Church. The consequence was that the Church stood alone among professions, in that people found entrance into it without any sort of fitness for the position they took, and that their promotion when in it was entirely independent of the qualifications which they showed. There was no other profession in the world of which that was true, and it was a fact that must for ever stand, so long as the Church was unreformed, at any rate, in the way of the progress and benefit of the Church. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London showed a very different spirit, and he (Mr. E. R. Russell) took the liberty of assuring him that the spirit in which he regarded the Church was the spirit in which it was regarded by those who advocated Disestablishment. There was no feeling of hostility to the Church. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] That was undoubtedly a fact, and he ventured to say that in addressing audiences upon this subject there were many Members on that side of the House who had experienced that to which he testified. It would be an audacious proceeding if any man on that side of the House were to address any audience of Liberals in terms of disrespect towards the Established Church. Such a thing was never heard at Liberal meetings. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" *from the Opposition, and counter cheers.*] He should be glad to receive instances to the contrary. He imagined that the cheers on his side came from men who knew the truth of what he said—men who had frequently addressed public meetings, and who had never deviated from the tone he had mentioned, and never found an audience which was unwilling to reciprocate that tone. The feeling which welled up from the audiences at these meetings in the utmost fulness and fervour was that a Church was unworthy of its name which could not in a spiritual manner perform spiritual functions; and no expression of that truth was ever uttered at Liberal meetings without immediately obtaining a great response. That was the spirit of the reform which was desired by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London; but when they had a speech in the tone of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University—who, by his hereditary connection as well as by his personal attachments, was a warm and sincere friend of the Church—when they had a speech from a man of that position and mind which was saturated from beginning to end with the vice of property—with the feeling that they would be acting dangerously if they severed the connection of property with the existence of the Established Church — then he said it was men who made speeches of that sort who wrote the letters of doom upon the Church of England. It was they who placed their Church in danger. There would be nothing on his side of the House but sympathy for those who were endeavouring to bring the Church of England into a right spiritual condition —into a condition, namely, of spiritual efficiency corresponding with the beliefs and the aspirations and the emotions of its members. They believed the Church would grow in strength and attachment with its people if that cardinal principle was held in view; and they on their side would never offer resistance to reforms which would tend in that direction, although they remained firm in the judgment that nothing but Disestablishment would eventually bring that desirable consummation to pass.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE (Cambridge University) said, he must congratulate the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) and the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) on the spirit of their speeches, which showed a recognition of the Church in its spiritual capacity; and he was glad that the same spirit had, on the whole, been maintained throughout the debate. He was sorry, however, that the red herring had been drawn across their path by the Home Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman objected that the Bill did not cover the whole ground of Church Reform. But it covered as much of it as could well be done on one occasion, and by one Bill. Then, what was meant by the equalization of ecclesiastical incomes? If it meant dividing the incomes of the Church as they stood among all the clergy it would be very like what was done by the old millionaire when he gave a franc apiece to the Communists who broke into his house and told them that was about what would be their share in a general scramble. What everyone would get from the Bishop down to the curate would be the equality of starvation. It was grossly unfair to keep out of the discussion the great fact of the process of systematically increasing ecclesiastical incomes which had been going on now for many years through the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. They knew that the incomes of the clergy were every year being increased on a system earnestly, wisely, and most laboriously carried out. To ignore that fact was a thing which, as a Churchman, he most loudly raised his voice against. With regard to the Bill, there were some things in it of which he very much approved, while he must, in passing, say that he was old-fashioned enough not to be much shocked at the sale of next presentations. As a special subject of commendation he would select the provision by which an advowson was allowed to be bought by a man holding a moderate estate in the same or an adjoining parish. He believed that drew the line where it ought to be drawn. The man would have an elastic interest in the parish, and therefore was a fitting person to hold the patronage. The Bill, in a sort of nebulous way, dealt with a Board of Church Patronage, and such a Board seemed to have received the approval of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London. But if it was to be composed of officials in Church and State they might find the red tape spirit strong on it, and they would not get a spiritual man sent to the living. On the other hand, if they got a Board preponderatingly composed of spiritual elements, it would become the fighting ground of opposite doctrines and parties in the Church. In any case, there would be the risk of compromise. On the whole, this question of Church patronage would have to be looked at all round, and he would be glad if a solution could be found for a problem full of complications. He should vote for the second reading of the Bill, but hoped that ample time would be given in Committee for considering the difficult questions involved. It would be a great pity to lose this golden opportunity of effecting a reform which would be for the practical benefit of the Church.

Viscount LYMINGTON (Devon, South Molton) said, he did not wish to put the House to the trouble of a division; but he could not support the Bill, because it asserted a principle which he believed to be absolutely wrong and unjustifiable—that a patron had a right to dispose for any money consideration whatever of a sacred spiritual trust. He, like many below the Gangway, had listened with great pleasure to the admirable speech of the Home Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman, while saying that he would vote for the second reading, had delivered a strong speech against the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman said that it was a matter which ought to be dealt with in a large way as a whole, argued against the right of the patron to dispose of livings, and went into the larger question of Church Reform, saying very justly that until they had destroyed the money interest of the patron in the trust they would never be able to deal effectually with any question of Church Reform. He (Viscount Lymington) objected to this subject being dealt with in a piecemeal form, and it was for that reason he opposed the present Bill. Suppose this Bill passed, which embodied the vicious principle that a patron had a right to sell the living, the patron of a living, say, of £1,200 a-year, from which there were few outgoings, but which for public grounds it was contemplated on the death of the existing incumbent to subdivide, might say—"As Parliament has recognized my right to appropriate the saleable value of the living, it must give me some compensation for the diminished value of that right. The patronage of £1,200 a-year is of infinitely more value than that of the several livings to be carved out of it." What was the position, speaking broadly, of the patrons of livings? Many of them were country squires, at present very necessitous. If they passed this Bill, one of its first effects would be that this class of patrons would go to the Governors of the Queen Anne's Bounty and make applications, and the result would be that Parliament would mortgage the salaries of the clergy and the welfare of the parishioners. He had stated what appeared to him to be very strong reasons against any legislation of this kind, believing that the only way in which the subject could be properly dealt with was for Parliament to declare that in future no sales of livings should be permitted. He had listened with great pleasure to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London (Mr. Hubbard), who seemed to sympathize with Liberal Members in their view of this matter. The right hon. Gentleman, however, made one qualification which appeared to be a very futile one. He would allow the patrons to sell once; but what good was there in allowing patrons to sell an article once which they could not dispose of? The only intelligible principle upon which the House could proceed in this matter with the view of a real reform of the Church was to say that in future no sales of Church patronage should be permitted. He was not anxious to press this question to a division unless he was supported by his hon. Friends; but he must protest against legislation of this kind, as being inimical to the highest, truest, and most spiritual interests of the Church.

Mr. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University) said, he thought that the speech to which the House had just listened was not a hopeful sign that the settlement of this question would be grappled with in a proper spirit. He trusted, however, that the tone assumed by the noble Lord would not be imitated. For his own part, he heartily supported the second reading of the Bill. Two years ago he had the honour of serving on a Committee appointed to deal with this subject, and presided over by the deceased statesman, Mr. Forster, whose loss they all deplored. Nothing was more satisfactory to those who represented the interests of the Church of England on that Committee than the open and kindly way in which they were met by Gentlemen representing the Nonconformist Bodies. The Committee nearly arrived at a solution of this difficult question; but, unfortunately, the time of the year when they reported was not favourable to this kind of legislation. The Report of the Committee was presented in July, and owing to the nature of the Business which occupied Parliament subsequently they found themselves unable to proceed further. It ought not, however, to be difficult for the House in its corporate capacity to settle the question. There were two reasons advanced against the Bill by hon. Members opposite. First, that it did not go far enough; and, secondly, that, in the words of the noble Lord, it recognized a vicious principle. As to the first objection, he had to say that personally he was willing to take what he could get. He was not anxious that Church matters should be so often brought before the notice of the House; but, questions of this kind having been brought forward for discussion, the House must deal with them in the manner most conducive to the interests of the Church. Coupling this Bill, therefore, with the Amendments suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Horncastle Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. E. Stanhope), he thought a very satisfactory solution of this particular and most difficult part of what was called Church Reform was submitted to them. The objection raised by the noble Lord had their sympathies; but it must, at the same time, be remembered that they were not dealing with the sacred functions themselves, but with the right of nominating a person ordained to those functions to discharge the ministerial duties. They contended, therefore, that, the right of presentation hitherto having been a matter of contract, and the right to present having hitherto been a saleable right, it was unfair by a stroke of the pen to take it away without, as the House had always done in the case of vested interests, compensating the persons thus deprived. The manner of arriving at this compensation was undoubtedly a matter of great difficulty. He recognized the difficulty of charging it on the benefice, and he was unable to suggest an alternative; but it certainly was not a question to be disposed of in an off-hand manner, or one to be set aside as unworthy of consideration, because it had something of the vice of property about it. He protested against the doctrine laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Beresford Hope) with regard to the right of sale to the next presentation. Owing to the scandals which had cropped up in the Church from time to time on this point, he urged that the right of sale to the next presentation ought to be abolished. While he admitted that the Bill contained many salutary enactments, he hoped, at the same time, that the hon. Member for Huddersfield would agree to the suggestion urged by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Horncastle Division of Lincolnshire. By establishing a register, in which transactions could be enrolled, the risk of abuse would be diminished. The Bishops ought to have the right to prohibit the presentation of persons either too young or too old, or disqualified by incapacity of any kind, either mental or physical. Within due limits, also, the rights of the parishioners ought to be extended. He desired to see the opportunity given to the parishioners to state their objections to the presentation to any living in order to guard against improper appointments being made. By such reforms it was hoped to make the Church more worthy and more able to discharge its high and sacred functions, while, at the same time, not sacrificing any of those which he believed to be fundamental to her constitution.

Mr. ALBERT GREY (Northumberland, Tyneside) said, he must congratulate the House on the excellent tone which had pervaded this debate; the sympathetic tone of the admirable and eloquent speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Russell) had been specially gratifying and satisfactory to him. He was also pleased to hear the declaration of the Home Secretary that the time was not far distant when the Government of the day must take up the question of Church Reform in a broad and comprehensive manner; and he could not understand the regrets expressed by hon. Gentlemen opposite at that declaration, because such a declaration ought to be matter of congratulation to them. He did not intend to detain the House very long with what he had to say; but he wished to make one very short remark upon the Bill itself. In his opinion, the Bill did not attack the real evil which lay at the bottom of the question. The real evil was not whether hon. Members who sat on that side of the House should be able to sell to hon. Gentlemen who sat on the other side of it any patronage they might happen to possess, but whether anybody, no matter who, should have unfettered and absolute right of placing in a particular parish anyone as a clergyman whom he might choose, however obnoxious the appointment might be to the overwhelming majority of the parishioners at large. That was the real evil. It did not matter to the parishioner whether "A" or "B" had the power of appointing to their particular parish; but it did matter whether any person, qualified or not, could be appointed whether they liked it or not. If they wished to get rid of the abuses and scandals which were at present seen in connection with the disposal of the patronage of the Church of England, they must provide means to secure that the interests of the parishioners should be properly regarded and respected. It would be better that the present practice of sale should continue to be allowed, provided that the patron were compelled to consult the wishes of the parishioners, than that the sale of livings should be prohibited and the patron still be permitted to appoint an incumbent obnoxious to the parishioners. He did not wish, for his part, to put himself in opposition to what appeared to be the general sense of the House, and on that ground, therefore, he should not oppose the second reading of the Bill; but there was so much in it that was objectionable that he must enter his protest now against it, and he gave Notice that on the Motion for going into Committee he would move an Amendment giving parishioners the power of rejecting the compulsory putting over them of a priest or pastor whom they considered not equal to the work that he had to do. If they gave the parishioners that right of veto he did not believe that the saleable value of an advowson would be worth one year's purchase. Accordingly, when this Bill came up again, and the Motion was made that the Speaker leave the Chair, he would move that it be an Instruction to the Committee to insert clauses to enable the parishioners to protect their rights and secure that they should have the power of veto on the appointment of any minister who, in their opinion, might be unsuitable to their parish. He considered it his duty to make this protest, and was obliged to the House for the indulgence they had given him to enable him to do so so.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I hope the House will allow me during a very few moments to occupy its attention, inasmuch as I have for many years taken great interest in this subject. As a contrast has been drawn between my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Raikes) and the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hubbard) sitting below me, I may be allowed, in the first place, to say that I hope I am not wanting either in the respect due to the political position of my right hon. Friend, or in personal friendship towards him, when I declare that the opinions he holds on this subject are regarded with concern by friends of the Church, and by those who ordinarily work with him—indeed, I may say for myself, they are looked upon with painful regret. I believe that the sympathies of the great body of Churchmen in this country are with my right hon. Friend the Member for the City of London (Mr. Hubbard), and I feel convinced that, as time goes on and years multiply, that sympathy will increase in a large and most marked degree. Having said so much, I now venture to congratulate the friends of the Church—and may I not say the House of Commons, too—upon the friendly tone towards it which has characterized this discussion. I care not whether hon. Members look forward to Disestablishment, or to a continuance of the Church in her present position; but there has been exhibited today a desire to extend the usefulness of the Church of England, which I believe will be a source of strength to that Church. There has been in the Church during the last few years a marked increase of the spirit of reform, and also a growth of spiritual life; and I cannot help regarding the language which has been used by hon. Members in this debate as a tone of reciprocity and of sympathy with the Church in both those respects. I do not propose to occupy the time of the House at any length on this occasion; but I feel that the friends of the Church of England are deeply indebted to hon. Members opposite for the speeches they have made and for the Bill they have introduced. We cannot hope at once or by one Statute to get rid of all the evils which cling round the system of patronage; it is, at least, something to get rid of a portion of those evils. The noble Lord opposite (Viscount Lymington) contended, in the course of his interesting speech, that the passing of this Bill would confirm the position of patronage, and give a new sanction to the sale of patronage. For my part, I cannot see that this Bill would have any such effect. The rights of sale are enforceable in any Court, and the effect of the measure would not be to give any new sanction whatever to them. Its effect would, on the contrary, be to limit the exercise of rights sanctioned by law. It is a great deal to get rid of the evils appertaining to the sales of presentations, and a very great benefit indeed to abolish now and henceforth the mischief arising from donatives. Some hon. Members on the other side of the House have made allusion to the spiritual action of the Church of England as contrasted with her secular position. I hope they will allow me, speaking of Nonconformists with the respect which I honestly feel, to say that in the work of preaching the Gospel to the people there must, under any circumstances, necessarily be a secular element. The places of worship are themselves of a secular character; the material fabric is essentially secular, and must be held under the law in any country. And when you withdraw any number of gentlemen from the ordinary pursuits of common life and prevent them from following a profession of gain, you are bound in some mode or another to make secular provision for them and their families, in order that they may maintain themselves in a position of becoming dignity. That is a remark common to the Church of England and to all Nonconformist Bodies. The chief reason why I rose, however, was to express an earnest hope that before the Bill leaves this House it will have embodied in it either the clauses suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. E. Stanhope), or some even stronger clauses with regard to unfit persons. An hon. Member who spoke from the other side of the House made some reference to this subject. I have sufficient acquaintance with the work of the Church to know what extraordinary care is taken in the selection of persons for ordination. There will be some disappointments, no doubt, when you are dealing with men at such an early stage of life; but these disappointments ought not to be thrown in the face of the Episcopal Bench. That, however, which I regard as the most important of the whole of the matters involved in this question is that of the unfitness of the clergy. It is a comparatively small matter who nominates to a living; the question which really affects the welfare of the parish and the parishioners is that of the fitness of the clergyman when he is appointed; and I do hope that in the Committee stage of this Bill clauses will be inserted certainly not less strong, probably stronger, than the clauses which have been suggested by my right hon. Friend. I happen to have known in my experience the most lamentable cases of persons being appointed to livings the duties of which they were clearly unfit to discharge. The unfitness may be divided into two classes. In the first place, the clergyman may be naturally incompetent to perform any of the spiritual duties which will be intrusted to him; and, in the next place, the unfitness may really be an unfitness for carrying out the duties connected with that particular parish. The first class will be dealt with by this Bill; and if any approach is made towards abolishing the second class, I, for one, shall greatly rejoice. As to placing a charge upon livings, I must say that the livings now are poor enough, and the sorrows and poverty of the clergy are sufficient; and although I recognize many of the evils belonging to patronage, I think you might well bear those evils a little longer if the only alternative is to place a charge on the livings. My right hon. Friend the Member for the City of London (Mr. Hubbard), as a statistician, has quoted figures sufficiently on this subject, and I shall not endeavour further to elaborate the point. I sincerely hope that these provisions will be expunged from the Bill, and that some other mode will be found for compensating patrons if further provision prove to be necessary. There is one further point on which I wish to make a few observations. There are now provisions in the Church Buildings Act whereby, if a person or persons erect a church, he or they may have the patronage of that church. I believe that arrangement has caused the erection of many churches, and has given rise to much parish work of a most excellent class. I hope the Bill will be amended in such a manner, if amendment be necessary, that these arrangements may continue. I believe that if they do not continue great heartburnings will arise, and great impediments will be thrown in the way of the work of the Church of England. If a church is built in an existing parish, the patronage belongs to the rector or vicar. The rector or the vicar is not always the most fit person to exercise this patronage; and it is by the arrangement to which I have alluded that patronage is taken out of the hands of the rector or vicar and placed in those of the persons who erect the church, and who thus give a strong guarantee of the deep interest they take in the parish. I thank the House for having allowed me to make these few observations. I am conscious that I have touched only the fringe of the question; but I do not wish to say more than is necessary to explain the particular point for the mention of which I rose.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.) said, he regretted that the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. F. S. Powell) should have found it necessary to impute objectionable motives on the part of those who believed that Disestablishment was the only cure for the evils from which the Church suffered. He believed the Preamble of the Bill, that the sale of livings was a great scandal, and injuriously affected religion generally. This was the only instance to which they could point in which great public offices were sold and bartered in so discreditable a manner. In the case of the much inferior Services of the Army, Parliament had long ago been compelled by public opinion to get quit of the scandal of the purchase of commissions, and he believed that a stronger public opinion would yet arise to put an end to the great public scandal now under consideration. A distinction used to be maintained between the sale of a next presentation and the sale of the advowson itself; but he ventured to say that in principle and in nefariousness there was no difference between them. So far as the House was concerned now, with the two extraordinary exceptions of the right hon. Members for the University of Cambridge, there was absolute unanimity as to the scandal of the sale of either next presentations or of advowsons. There never had been, so far as he had observed, any opposition in that House to the advancement of this question. It had been in the other House, as the Bishop of Peterborough well knew, that the rights of property had been so strenuously maintained as to make it impossible for that eminent Prelate to secure the slightest advance; and when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Stanhope) insinuated that opposition was likely to arise from those who advocated Disestablishment, he would ask him to notice where the cause of delay really lay. The Peers owned a great proportion of the livings, and when the Bishop of Peterborough attempted to deal with the question in the most cautious and even timid manner he could not obtain their sanction. The difficulty in the way of providing a remedy for the present scandal was almost insuperable. Almost every Member who had spoken on this Bill had a desire to alter some part of the scheme. His conviction was that there was no radical remedy possible except through Disestablishment. What his hon. Friend was attempting to do was to reconcile incompatibles, and he would fail, as all other reformers had failed who sought to go on the same lines. He would ask, if they took away the patronage from the present unsuitable and incompetent patrons, where were they to lodge it? Parliament would not be content to put this very important power in the hands of the Ordinary, or the churchwardens, elected as they were at present. The hon. Member for Northumberland had suggested some strong representative Board; but he thought the great majority of Churchmen would infinitely prefer to have the Church disestablished. [*Cries of* "No" *and* "Never!"] He was speaking of what he had seen in most of the utterances of earnest and genuine sons of the Church. If the suggestion were made to them that the management of their Church as a spiritual and religious institute should be given to a Board selected by all the parishioners, they would infinitely prefer that the Church should be disestablished, and that they should manage it themselves. There was a craving by many Churchmen for a more direct control; but so long as the Church was a National Institution they could not expect to have exclusive power over it. Then came the question whether Parliament should recognize any money right whatever in patronage, and what should be the compensation? He held that there was no moral right for compensation? If the principle of compensation was to be admitted, he wanted to know where his hon. Friend (Mr. Leatham) would find himself? The hon. Gentleman laid down an arbitrary amount; but he did not see that he had any more right to rob a man of 10*s.* than of a sovereign. If the patron was entitled to compensation at all, he was entitled to full compensation. An important question had been raised as to where the money was to come from. His hon. Friend was going to rob Peter to pay Paul; but if his plan was not adopted, he was entitled to ask what was the alternative? When the Irish Church was disestablished the Prime Minister found means for compensation, and means would be found when Disestablishment took place in England; but until that time came hon. Members should rest assured that Parliament would not provide other ecclesiastical funds. He was profoundly of the conviction that it would be impossible for the Episcopalian Church to do the full work of which it was capable until it was freed from the trammels of the State. At the same time, he had never entertained anything but the most friendly feeling towards the Church as a religious institution; and he was not aware of anyone who acted with him in these matters who did not wish for the spiritual prosperity of that Church. He was highly gratified with the course the discussion had taken, and he thanked the Home Secretary for having pointed out the lines upon which reform must go.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I hope, Sir, that the House will be allowed to arrive at a decision on this Bill under consideration. I wish to caution the House, as an old friend of Church Reform, against supposing that the discussion which has taken place on this Bill augurs well for the success of Church Reform. I am afraid that those of us who are Church Reformers now, as we have been in the past, will always have to face the old enemy, employing his old methods and using the same weapons. We must not be surprised if it is not intended that this Bill should have operative action if it be passed into law, of which, perhaps, there is a great deal of doubt. I deplore the attitude of the Government with regard to this Bill. If not one of *non possumus*, it is almost one of silence. It has been represented that that attitude is not entirely unfriendly; but the Home Secretary, in the remarks which he made, took care to explain that he spoke personally his own opinion rather than gave expression to the views of the Government. If a Liberal Government has not the energy to deal with this portion of Church Reform now before the House, I want to know how we are to expect them to deal with the whole question when it comes up for settlement? My opinion is that the larger you make the proposals for Church Reform the greater are the risks that you run in not having them dealt with. The hon. Member for Bradford, who has just spoken, said that the Bill before the House could lead but to one result, and that was to Disestablishment of the Church of England. If that be so, and seeing that that is what the hon. Member desires to see, he ought to stand aside and let us do his own work for him. But the hon. Member had not always been of that opinion, or rather this has not always been his plea. I have been compelled to hear his remarks in favour of Church Reform time after time; but he has not ventured to advance any proposals of reform of his own in spite of the friendly professions towards the Church, which he never fails to proclaim in this House. I wish to guard myself against its being supposed that I accept the declaration which has been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Northumberland (Mr. A. Grey) with regard to the exercise of patronage. I do not think that the patronage of the State should be set aside for a system that would make it possible that a minority in a parish—say, at an Easter vestry, or at a meeting in the nature of a vestry—should be able to drag up for discussion the past life and past circumstances of a presentee with a view of arriving at a conclusion for a living, especially as only *ex parte* statements would be made as to his character at such meetings. I say that this would not be fair to a man who would afterwards have to remain for his lifetime in a parish as its pastor. That is what is meant by the direct veto which is contained in this Bill. Nevertheless, I am disposed to support the Bill, because I feel that it will tend to the extinction of an indefensible principle, the principle of private patronage. Private ownership in a living means the right to alienate, the right to alienate involves the right of sale, and the right of sale cannot be restricted by Act of Parliament from being possibly exercised in a corrupt manner. On this ground alone I would support it. But I support it on the further ground that in Committee it may very well be amended in its details, especially in reference to the exercise of future patronage. It should be vested directly in the parishioners in conjunction with the ecclesiastical heads of the Church. I would not vest the patronage in lay or episcopal hands solely. I am sensible of the arguments against increasing the ecclesiastical patronage of the hierarchy; but I would like to ask the hon. Member for Bradford and his Friends, supposing they do succeed in disestablishing the Church, and supposing the Church under their kind advice, did remodel her constitution, who would exercise the right of presentation? Clearly either the parishioners or the hierarchy, or both. That alone, I think, is a good reason for maintaining a friendly attitude towards this Bill. I wish to reserve to myself any proposal as to the cost of sale of the future profits in a living. As Secretary of the Royal Commission, I know that the number of such cases are, proportionately, extremely small; and, although the cases where the law would operate would be few, still it would operate often enough to prevent corrupt use of the right of sale. I do not think that the question of compensation will be one which it will be very difficult to deal with; and if the proposal is that the Church should practically purify herself out of her own endowments, I think, perhaps, Churchmen may see that that is a preferable proposition to that that the Church should be purified by the help of funds voluntarily contributed by her own members. In conclusion, I can assure the hon. Member for Bradford that the friends of the Church will continue their endeavours for her reform, in spite of the opposition of those whose sole and avowed object is the despoiling of her revenues and the destruction of her powers of usefulness; and I hope that the Bill will be read a second time, and that in future stages it will receive better assistance from the Government than the rather unfriendly pronouncement of the Home Secretary has offered.

Mr. Stuart-Wortley

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, S.) said, he was able to speak more favourably of the Bill than some hon. Members had. He could support it on the ground that he wished to remove a reproach from the Church of England, diminishing its usefulness and hindering its work. It was apparent to those who had watched the debate on the Bill that the chief opposition to the measure had come from those who called themselves the friends of the Church, and who sat on the Opposition side of the House. If the hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill had listened to the whole of the debate, he must have felt that the most damaging criticisms to which it had been subjected had come from the friends of the Church, and not from its supposed opponents. He (Mr. Carvell Williams) did not know what might be the hon. Member for Huddersfield's opinion on the point; but it was certain that if the Bill ever came out of Committee it would be in a very different form from that which it now presented, and the mutilation to which it was destined to be subjected would be performed by those who professed to be the friends of the Established Church. He could not understand how any man, no matter to what branch of the Christian Church he might belong, could wish for the maintenance of the present system one hour longer than it was necessary to maintain it. One reason why he looked with favour upon the Bill—though it was not one for which he could hope to have the sympathy of hon. Gentlemen opposite—was because he looked upon the measure as a little piece of Disestablishment. When the time came for Disestablishment, it would be found that one of the greatest difficulties to ,be encountered would be the question of Disendowment. The Legislature would then have to deal with two classes—the clergy and the patrons of the Established Church. Now, the Bill, whether hon. Members opposite knew it or not, anticipated that difficulty, by proposing to disestablish many of the patrons in advance. The Home Secretary insisted that one reason why the sale of Church livings should be prohibited was that it would be far more easy, in the case of Disestablishment, to redistribute the revenues of the Church than now. He (Mr. Carvell Williams) thought the efforts of the Bill would be far more reaching than the right hon. Gentleman supposed. At present there was a very considerable number of persons pecuniarily interested in maintaining the Established Church, and among these the patrons of livings occupied a prominent place. It was not unnatural to suppose that those men, when no longer bound by such interests, would in the future be less zealous in the support of the Church than they had been in the past. He did not seek to conceal that the Bill contained serious defects; because, while it professed to be based on a certain principle, it did not go far enough in applying that principle. There was nothing about spiritual trust in the clauses of the Bill. On the contrary, there was nothing in the Bill but "property, property, property." The sale of advowsons had been referred to, and the practice could not be defended. Not very long ago, he would remind the House, a Racing Company bought a site near Leicester because they wished to have a racecourse. Connected with the property they purchased was a living, which was now in the possession of the Company, and if the Bill of his hon. Friend should pass, that Company, or whoever might own the property, would have the power of deciding who should discharge the functions appertaining to the living. Now, he saw no reason why a landlord should be more competent to choose a minister than a rich minister or a lawyer; but in any case it would be absolutely in the power of the owner to make the selection, no matter how unsuitable might be the person chosen. There was one other point to which he would briefly refer. The Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty played a very important part in connection with the measure. His hon. Friend said he did not see in whose hands the powers could better be put. He (Mr. Carvell Williams) confessed to his own imcompetency to express an opinion on the point. He did not know who the Governors were. He doubted if there were many persons in that House who did. The Act of Parliament constituting the Board made it a Corporation consisting of the Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Master of the Rolls, the Attorney General and Solicitor General, the Lord Lieutenants of Counties, and the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London. Five of these Governors might form a quorum; and there was this suggestive addition, that three, at least, of the quorum should be Archbishops and Bishops. He confessed that before giving larger powers to those who constituted such a body he should like to know how often they met, and whether, in fact, the Board was not, for practical purposes, the secretary and officials. He should like to ask the Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) or the right hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler) how far either of them was responsible for the management of the Board. He had no doubt that the hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill was conscious that the Bill contained grave defects, and that he would admit that it was impossible for him to go further in the direction he was moving. The fact, however, was that the difficulties which the hon. Member desired to obviate never would be fully met so long as they had to deal with the Church as an Established Institution of the country. The Church of Ireland bore the very same reproach and encountered the same difficulties; but the difficulties were solved when that Church was disestablished. So it would be with the Church of England and not before. The Church must first be liberated, and then, and not till then, would it be completely purified.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) said, he thought that the promoters of the Bill might be fairly satisfied with the debate which had taken place upon it, and which marked a great advance in the position of the question. He was sorry the question had been made a Disestablishment debate by some hon. Members. He had heard many expressions of liberality used by the opponents of the Church towards the members of the Church, and he wished that these expressions of feeling were universally carried into practice. He also regretted that his hon. Friend (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) had thrown cold water on the Bill. The views of the friends of the Church were hardly the views which had been expressed on the Front Opposition Bench. He desired to support the Bill; but he could not help thinking that the measure required amendments in some respects, for it ignored the existence both of the Bishop and of the parishioners, and introduced the cumbrous machinery of Queen Anne's Bounty Board, which was altogether unsuited to the work proposed to be entrusted to it.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* next.

WATERWORKS (RATING) BILL.

(*Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Dodds, Mr. Coddington, Sir H. Roscoe, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Picton.*)

[BILL 117.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR (Leeds, Central), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, its object was to remove the difficulties which at present beset the system under which waterworks were assessed to the rates. This Bill applied only to waterworks which belonged to Local Authorities; but he was prepared, if such were the sense of the House, to amend it in Committee so that it should apply also to waterworks owned by private Companies. The present system of rating was established by the Parochial Assessment Act, 1836, and was based on a valuation of what a hypothetical tenant would pay for the undertaking. That system worked well enough in cases where the waterworks were confined to a single parish; but difficulties arose when the waterworks passed through more than one parish, which was usually the case with regard to undertakings in the hands of Corporations. These difficulties were further increased by the necessity of distinguishing between those parts of the undertaking which were directly productive of revenue, and those parts which were only indirectly productive. In some parishes through which the works passed, there might be no sale of water at all. The Bill proposed to abolish altogether their old friend the hypothetical tenant, and to simplify the system by fixing the rateable value in proportion to the amount of gross revenue received from the actual sale of water—the proportion to be smaller in the case of pumping works than in the case of gravitation works, on the ground that the former cost more both in original outlay and for maintenance. As to the distribution between the different parishes, it was proposed to divide the rateable value into two unequal parts, two-thirds and one-third. Two-thirds was to be divided between the parishes actually supplied with water in proportion to the amount of gross revenue derived from each, and the one-third was to be distributed among the parishes through which the works passed, according to the amount of capital expended in each. It was possible that under the Bill waterworks would be assessed rather lower than at at present. If so, as the Local Authorities did not desire to escape from any just burden, it would be easy in Committee to alter the figures in the Bill. The Bill was confined to waterworks, and not extended to other undertakings, such as gasworks, partly not to overload the Bill, and partly because water was a commodity in a category of its own. The advantage of the scheme proposed by the Bill was that it would effect great simplification of the present law and produce clearness and certainty where at present there was confusion and uncertainty, and probably would tend to diminish litigation. If the Bill were read a second time, he should be satisfied that it should be referred to a Select Committee.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. G. Balfour.*)

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne), in moving the rejection of the Bill, said, it was most mischievous, and he would give it his most strenuous opposition. The Bill was framed for the purpose of reducing the rating of waterworks, but excluded all other undertakings of a kindred nature. At the present time the principle applied to the rating of waterworks was precisely the same as that applied to the rating of gasworks, mines, railways, and other subjects of rateability. It was calculated what rent a tenant would pay for such undertakings, and certain deductions were made in order to arrive at the net assessment. The system had been in operation for 50 years at least, and, in the long run, had been eminently satisfactorily. The ingenuity of surveyors and valuers had devised a method of calculation by which the rateable value of large undertakings was readily arrived at, and he had heard no complaints with regard to it. The satisfactory manner in which the system worked was shown by the few appeals which took place, and the fact that only a few special matters had ever come before the Courts with regard to the subject. It was proposed by the Bill to upset this whole system, and to introduce a mysterious rule of thumb, based on no principle whatever, that one-eighth of the gross revenue should be rateable value on pumping works, and one-sixth of the gross revenue on gravitation works. How was this one-eighth arrived at? It was by the experience based on the Act of Parliament which this Bill proposed to supersede. If the system of rating was to be altered, why, in the world, should it be done in the case of waterworks only? Why should gasworks and railways and mines be excluded? It was really an attempt on the part of the Local Authorities to get rid of their fair share of the rates. He regarded the Bill as of a mischievous character, and he begged to move that it be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Addison.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Stansfeld) (Halifax) said, that the Bill of the hon. Member appeared to deal with the question of the method rather than with that of the principle of rating waterworks. In his opinion, the whole subject of the method of rating waterworks, mines, and similar enterprizes ought to be considered together and not piecemeal. Had all the measures dealing with the various branches of this subject been referred to a Select Committee this measure might also have been efficiently referred to them; but he was not prepared to accede to the hon. Member's proposal to refer this measure by itself to a Select Committee. He might say that the House was occupied at the present moment with matters of a different character and of a larger order, and that it would therefore be difficult to get a working Committee to consider the subject at the present moment. If they agreed to the second reading of the Bill they should have committed themselves to the principle that the method of ascertaining the value of waterworks should be that of taking for the rateable value some proportion of the receipts. He was not prepared to commit himself to that proposition, and if the hon. Member thought it right to divide he should be compelled to vote against him. He would therefore suggest that the best course would be to adjourn the debate.

Mr. JACKSON (Leeds, N.) said, he considered that the suggestion thrown out by the right hon. Gentleman was perfectly fair and reasonable, and he therefore moved the adjournment of the debate.

Colonel MAKINS, in seconding the Motion for the adjournment of the debate, thanked the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. G. Balfour) for having brought forward a practical suggestion towards the settlement of this question. He, however, regretted that the right hon. Gentleman opposite had not held out any hopes that the Government would take up this subject when the other more pressing and more engrossing subjects, which no doubt filled the mind of the House, had been disposed of.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Jackson,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Tuesday* 25th May.

POOR RELIEF (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

[BILL 155.] CONSIDERATION.

Order for Consideration, as amended, read.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

A Clause (Constitution of Piers and Roads Commission,)—(*Mr. John Morley,*)—*brought up*, and read the first and second time, and *added.*

Another Clause (Powers of Commission as to roads and bridges,)—(*Mr. John Morley,*)—*brought up*, and read the first and second time, and *added.*

Another Clause (Powers of the Commissions as to piers and slips,)—(*Mr. John Morley,*)—*brought up*, and read the first and second time, and *added.*

Another Clause (Provision of funds,)—(*Mr. John Morley,*)—*brought up*, and read the first and second time, and *added.*

Another Clause (Extension of borrowing powers of Commissioners of Church Temporalities—32 and 33 Vic. c. 42,)—(*Mr. John Morley,*)—*brought up*, and read the first and second time, and *added.*

Another Clause (Expenses of Commission accounts,)—(*Mr. John Morley,*)—*brought up*, and read the first and second time, and *added.*

Amendment made.

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

QUESTION.

———o———

MINES — ACCIDENTS IN COAL MINES.

In answer to Mr. Arthur O'Connor and Mr. Tomlinson,

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Broadhurst) (Birmingham, Bordesley) said, that the Home Office were busy preparing a Bill to amend the Mines Regulation Act, which they hoped to be able to introduce immediately after Easter. He was much disappointed that the Report of the Commission on Coal Mine Accidents had not already been placed in the hands of hon. Members. It was very difficult indeed to discover where the fault of the delay rested. It was between the printers and other individuals. He had taken steps to insure the speedy distribution of the Report.

MOTIONS.

———o———

NEW WRITS.

Resolved, That, in all cases where the Seat of any Member has been declared void on the ground of corrupt practices or illegal practices, no Motion for the issue of a New Writ shall be made without two days' previous Notice in the Votes, and that such Notice be considered before Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions.—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE EXPENSES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Kimber, Bill to amend the Law relating to the expenses of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Kimber and Mr. Vanderbyl.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 167.]

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES (TRANSMISSION OF MONEY) BILL.

On Motion of Viscount Curzon, Bill to provide for the free transmission through the Post Office of money payable to the members of Friendly Societies under the rules of such Societies, *ordered* to be brought in by Viscount Curzon, Sir E. Birkbeck, Mr. Fellowes, Sir John Kennaway, and Mr. Tomlinson.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 168.]

METROPOLITAN POLICE (STATIONS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to amend the enactments relating to office stations and buildings for the Metropolitan Police Force, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers, and Mr. Henry H. Fowler.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 169.]

House adjourned at five minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 8*th April*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Poor Relief (Ireland) * (66); Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment * (67).

Second Reading—Lunacy (Vacating of Seats) (47); Prison Officers' Superannuation (61).

Third Reading—Compensation for Damages (50-68), and *passed.*

LUNACY (VACATING OF SEATS) BILL.

(*The Lord Balfour of Burleigh.*)

(NO. 47.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord BALFOUR, in moving that the Bill be read the second time, said, it applied to any Member of the House of Commons who might be afflicted with lunacy. At present there was no provision in the law by which, in such a case, the seat could be vacated, and the consequence was that the constituency was deprived of the services of their Member in the House of Commons. The object of the Bill was to enable the House of Commons, after certain inquiries, to vacate the seat of a Member who had become so afflicted. Under the Bill the Speaker would cause inquiries to be made and Reports presented to the House, and the House would take the course which the Speaker would recommend. He might add that the House of Commons had passed the Bill unanimously.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Balfour of Burleigh.*)

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

PRISON OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.—(No. 61.)

(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The PAYMASTER GENERAL (Lord Thurlow), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that its object was to remove doubts which existed in reference to this subject. The Bill had passed through the House of Commons, and there was no objection to it.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES BILL.

(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

(NO. 50.) THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3ª."—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

On Question, That the Bill do pass?

The PAYMASTER GENERAL (Lord Thurlow), in moving Amendments extending the operation of the Bill to the City, said, that as the City had in the first instance offered to contribute to the fund out of which this compensation would be paid, it would be ungenerous not to make the Bill apply to the City.

Amendments *moved*,

In Preamble, page 1, line 2, insert ("and in the City of London"); and Clause 2, page 1, line 15, insert ("or in the City of London.")—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

Amendments *agreed to;* Bill *passed* and sent to the Commons, and to be *printed* as amended. (No. 68.)

House adjourned at a quarter before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 8th April, 1886.

MINUTES.]—New Members Sworn—Samuel Smith, esquire, *for* Flint County; Samuel Hoare, esquire, *for* Norwich; William Sproston Caine, esquire, *for* Barrow-in-Furness.

Select Committee — National Provident Insurance, *nominated.*

Public Bills—*Leave*—Government of Ireland [*First Night*], *debate adjourned.*

Ordered—First Reading—School Board Elections (Scotland) (No. 2)* [170]; Church Sites (Compulsory Powers Repeal)* [171].

Second Reading — International and Colonial Copyright [156].

Committee—Report—Bankruptcy (Agricultural Labourers' Wages)* [130].

Considered as amended—Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order* [132]; Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment) [123].

Withdrawn—School Board Elections (Scotland)* [159].

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS (KENNINGTON DIVISION OF THE BOROUGH OF LAMBETH).

Mr. SPEAKER informed the House, that he had received from Sir William Ventris Field, knight, and the Honorable Sir Charles Day, knight, Justices of the High Court of Justice, and two of the Judges selected for the Trial of Election Petitions, a Certificate and Report relating to the Election for the Borough of Lambeth (Kennington Division):—

The Corrupt Practices Prevention Acts, 1854 to 1883.

To the Right Honorable the Speaker of the House of Commons.

We, the Honorable Sir William Ventris Field, knight, and the Honorable Sir John Charles Day, knight, Justices of the High Court of Justice, and two of the Judges for the time being for the trial of Election Petitions in England, do hereby, in pursuance of the said Acts, certify that upon the fifth and sixth days of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, we duly held a Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London, and within the Metropolitan District, for the trial of and did try the Parliamentary Election Petition for the Kennington Division of the Borough of Lambeth, in the County of Surrey (the same being a Borough within the Metropolitan District), wherein John Crossman, George Garlick, John Charles Jowett, and John Sandes were the Petitioners and Robert Gent-Davis was the Respondent, which prayed that it might be determined that the said Robert Gent-Davis, being the Member whose Election and return were complained of in the said Petition, was not duly elected or returned, and that his Election and return were and are wholly null and void.

And, in further pursuance of the said Acts, we report that at the conclusion of the said Trial we determined that the said Robert Gent-Davis, being the Member whose Election and return were complained of in the said Petition, was duly elected and returned, and we do hereby certify in writing such our determination to you.

And whereas no charge was made in the said Petition of any corrupt practice having been committed at the Election to which the said Petition refers, but charges were made in the said Petition of illegal practices having been committed at the said Election. We, in further pursuance of the said Acts, report as follows: That no illegal practice was proved to have been committed by or with the knowledge or consent of any Candidate at such Election, nor has any Candidate been proved guilty by his Agents of any illegal practice within the meaning of "The Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883," in reference to such Election.

We further report that there is no reason to believe that illegal practices extensively prevailed at the Election for the Kennington Division of the said Borough of Lambeth, to which the said Petition relates.

Dated the 7th day of April 1886.

William V. Field.
John C. Day.

And the said Certificate and Report were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

MOTIONS.

PARLIAMENT—ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Notice of Motion relating to the Government of Ireland have precedence of the Orders of the Day."—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): On this Motion, I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman a Question as to the continuance of the debate. I assume that it will be continued to-morrow, and that it will be for the general convenience of the House that it should be continued without interruption *de die in diem.* I have information, however, which leads me to think that there is no probability that it can be finished to-morrow, and therefore I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether Her Majesty's Government still intend to interpose the Budget between this Motion and the succeeding Motion of which the right hon. Gentleman has given Notice, or, whether some arrangement cannot be made by which this debate could be continued on Monday, when I should hope it might be concluded?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone): (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): No tidings have reached me to the effect stated by the right hon. Baronet. I certainly think it would be very desirable that the debate should be brought to its conclusion continuously and as soon as may be convenient to the House; because, until the debate has been concluded, the Bill cannot be laid on the Table of the House, and hon. Members cannot have the most certain and authentic knowledge of its contents. I certainly hope that we shall be able to arrange for the continuance, if necessary, of the debate to-morrow. I admit that it is very desirable that it should be concluded as soon as possible; and if it be prolonged beyond to-morrow, we must consider what we can best do for the convenience of the Public Service. But if it be postponed beyond Monday, I would point out that the effect would necessarily be that I must postpone the introduction of the Bill relating to land, and that, I think, would be a very great disadvantage, because it is quite necessary that the two Bills should go together.

Lord CLAUD HAMILTON (Liverpool, West Derby) asked the President of the Board of Trade, whether, supposing the debate were adjourned early, he really proposed to proceed with the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill, which was the first Order?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): I have no such expectation.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That the Notice of Motion relating to the Government of Ireland have precedence of the Orders of the Day.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE. [FIRST NIGHT.]

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian), in rising to move that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the provision for the future Government of Ireland, said: I could have wished, Mr. Speaker, on several grounds, that it had been possible for me on this single occasion to open to the House the whole of the policy and intentions of the Government with respect to Ireland. The two questions of land and of Irish government are, in our view, closely and inseparably connected, for they are the two channels through which we hope to find access, and effectual access, to that question which is the most vital of all—namely, the question of social order in Ireland. As I have said, those two questions are in our view—whatever they may be in that of anyone else—they are in our view, for reasons which I cannot now explain, inseparable the one from the other. But it is impossible for me to attempt such a task. Even as it is, the mass of materials that I have before me I may, without exaggeration, call enormous. I do not know that at any period a task has been laid upon me involving so large and so diversified an exposition, and it would be in vain to attempt more than human strength can, I think, suffice to achieve. I may say that, when contemplating the magnitude of that task, I have been filled with a painful mistrust; but that mistrust, I can assure the House, is absorbed in the yet deeper feeling of the responsibility that would lie upon me, and of the mischief that I should inflict upon the public interest, if I should fail to bring home to the minds of Members, as I seem to perceive in my own mind, the magnitude of all the varied aspects of this question. What I wish is that we should no longer fence and skirmish with this question, but that we should come to close quarters with it; that we should get if we can at the root; that we should take measures not merely intended for the wants of to-day and of to-morrow, but, if possible, that we should look into a more distant future; that we should endeavour to anticipate and realize that future by the force of reflection; that we should, if possible, unroll it in anticipation before our eyes, and make provision now, while there is yet time, for all the results that may await upon a right or wrong decision of to-day.

Mr. Speaker, on one point I rejoice to think that we have a material, I would say, a vital, agreement. It is felt on both sides of the House, unless I am much mistaken, that we have arrived at a stage in our political transactions with Ireland, where two roads part one from the other, not soon probably to meet again. The late Government—I am not now referring to this as a matter of praise or blame, but simply as a matter of fact—the late Government felt that they had reached the moment for decisive resolution when they made the announcement, on the last day of their Ministerial existence, that their duty compelled them to submit to Parliament proposals for further repressive criminal legislation. We concur entirely in that conclusion, and we think that the time is come when it is the duty of Parliament, when the honour of Parliament and its duty alike require, that it should endeavour to come to some decisive resolution in this matter; and our intention is, Sir, to propose to the House of Commons that which, as we think, if happily accepted, will liberate Parliament from the restraints under which of late years it has ineffectually struggled to perform the Business of the country; will restore legislation to its natural, ancient, unimpeded course; and will, above all, obtain an answer—a clear, we hope, and definite answer—to the question whether it is or is not possible to establish good and harmonious relations between Great Britain and Ireland on the footing of those free institutions to which Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen are alike unalterably attached.

Now, when I say that we are imperatively called upon to deal with the great subject of social order in Ireland, do not let me for a moment either be led myself, or lead others, into the dangerous fault of exaggeration. The crime of Ireland, the agrarian crime of Ireland, I rejoice to say, is not what it was in other days—days now comparatively distant, days within my own earliest recollection as a Member of Parliament. In 1833 the Government of Lord Grey proposed to Parliament a strong Coercion Act. At that time the information at their command did not distinguish between agrarian and ordinary crime as the distinction is now made. As to the present time, it is easy to tell the House that the serious agrarian crimes of Ireland, which in 1881 were 1,011, in 1885 were 245. But I go back to the period of 1832. The contrast is, perhaps, still more striking. In 1832 the homicides in Ireland were 248, in 1885 they were 65. The cases of attempts to kill, happily unfulfilled, in the first of those years were 209, in 1885 were 37. The serious offences of all other kinds in Ireland in 1832 were 6,014, in 1885 they were 1,057. The whole criminal offences in Ireland in the former year were 14,000, and in the latter year 2,683.

So far, therefore, Sir, we are not to suppose that the case with which we have now to deal is one of those cases of extreme disorder which threaten the general peace of society. Notwithstanding that, Sir, in order to lay the ground for the important measure we are asking leave to introduce—and well I am aware that it does require broad and solid grounds to be laid in order to justify the introduction of such a measure—in order to lay that ground, I must ask the House to enter with me into a brief review of the general features of what has been our course with regard to what is termed coercion, or repressive criminal legislation. And, Sir, the first point to which I would call your attention is this, that whereas exceptional legislation—legislation which introduces exceptional provisions into the law—ought itself to be in its own nature essentially and absolutely exceptional, it has become for us not exceptional, but habitual. We are like a man who, knowing that medicine may be the means of his restoration to health, endeavours to live upon medicine. Nations, no more than individuals, can find a subsistence in what was meant to be a cure. But has it been a cure? Have we attained the object which we desired, and honestly desired, to attain? No, Sir, agrarian crime has become, sometimes upon a larger and sometimes upon a smaller scale, as habitual in Ireland as the legislation which has been intended to repress it, and that agrarian crime, although at the present time it is almost at the low water-mark, yet has a fatal capacity of expansion under stimulating circumstances, and rises from time to time, as it rose in 1885, to dimensions, and to an exasperation which becomes threatening to general social order, and to the peace of private and domestic life. I ought, perhaps, to supply an element, which I forgot at the moment, in comparing 1832 and 1885—that is to remind the House that the decrease of crime is not so great as it looks, because the population of Ireland at that time was nearly 8,000,000, whereas it may be taken at present at 5,000,000. But the exact proportion, I believe, is fairly represented by the figure I will now give. The population of Ireland now, compared with that time, is under two-thirds; the crime of Ireland now, as compared with that period, is under one-fifth.

But the agrarian crime in Ireland is not so much a cause as it is a symptom. It is a symptom of a yet deeper mischief of which it is only the external manifestation. That manifestation is mainly threefold. In the first place, with certain exceptions for the case of winter juries, it is impossible to depend in Ireland upon the finding of a jury in a case of agrarian crime according to the facts as they are viewed by the Government, by the Judges, and by the public, I think, at large. That is a most serious mischief, passing down deep into the very groundwork of civil society. It is also, Sir, undoubtedly a mischief that, in cases where the extreme remedy of eviction is resorted to by the landlord—possibly, in some instances, unnecessarily resorted to, but, in other instances, resorted to after long patience has been exhausted—these cases of eviction, good, bad, and indifferent as to their justification, stand pretty much in one and the same discredit with the rural population of Ireland, and become, as we know, the occasion of transactions that we all deeply lament. Finally, Sir, it is not to be denied that there is great interference in Ireland with individual liberty in the shape of intimidation. Now, Sir, I am not about to assume the tone of the Pharisee on this occasion. There is a great deal of intimidation in England, too, when people find occasion for it; and if we, the English and the Scotch, were under the conviction that we had such grave cause to warrant irregular action, as is the conviction entertained by a very large part of the population in Ireland, I am not at all sure that we should not, like that part of the population in Ireland, resort to the rude and unjustifiable remedy of intimidation. I am very ambitious on this important and critical occasion to gain one object—that is, not to treat this question controversially. I have this object in view, and I do not despair of attaining it; and in order that I may do nothing to cause me to fail of attaining it, I will not enter into the question, if you like, whether there ever is intimidation in England or not.

But I will simply record the fact, which I thought it but just to accompany with a confession with regard to ourselves—I will simply record the fact that intimidation does prevail, not to the extent that is supposed, yet to a material and painful extent in Ireland. The consequence of that is to weaken generally the respect for law, and the respect for contract, and that among a people who, I believe, are as capable of attaining to the very highest moral and social standard as any people on the face of the earth. So much for coercion—if I use the phrase it is for brevity for repressive legislation generally—but there is one circumstance to which I cannot help calling the special attention of the House.

Nothing has been more painful to me than to observe that, in this matter, we are not improving, but, on the contrary, we are losing ground. Since the last half-century dawned, we have been steadily engaged in extending, as well as in consolidating, free institutions. I divide the period since the Act of Union with Ireland into two—the first from 1800 to 1832, the epoch of what is still justly called the great Reform Act; and, secondly, from 1833 to 1885. I do not know whether it has been as widely observed as I think it deserves to be that, in the first of those periods—32 years—there were no less than 11 years—it may seem not much to say, but wait for what is coming—there were no less than 11 of those 32 years in which our Statute Book was free throughout the whole year from repressive legislation of an exceptional kind against Ireland. But in the 53 years since we advanced far in the career of Liberal principles and actions—in those 53 years, from 1833 to 1885—there were but two years which were entirely free from the action of this special legislation for Ireland. Is not that of itself almost enough to prove that we have arrived at the point where it is necessary that we should take a careful and searching survey of our position? For, Sir, I would almost venture, trusting to the indulgent interpretation of the House, to say that the coercion we have heretofore employed has been spurious and ineffectual coercion, and that if there is to be coercion—which God forbid—it ought to be adequate to attain its end. If it is to attain its end it must be different, differently maintained, and maintained with a different spirit, courage, and consistency compared with the coercion with which we have been heretofore familiar.

Well, Sir, what are the results that have been produced? This result above all—and now I come to what I consider to be the basis of the whole mischief—that rightly or wrongly, yet in point of fact, law is discredited in Ireland, and discredited in Ireland upon this ground especially—that it comes to the people of that country with a foreign aspect, and in a foreign garb. These Coercion Bills of ours, of course—for it has become a matter of course—I am speaking of the facts and not of the merits—these Coercion Bills are stiffly resisted by the Members who represent Ireland in Parliament. The English mind, by cases of this kind and by the tone of the Press towards them, is estranged from the Irish people and the Irish mind is estranged from the people of England and Scotland. I will not speak of other circumstances attending the present state of Ireland, but I do think that I am not assuming too much when I say that I have shown enough in this comparatively brief review—and I wish it could have been briefer still—to prove that, if coercion is to be the basis for legislation, we must no longer be seeking, as we are always laudably seeking, to whittle it down almost to nothing at the very first moment we begin, but we must, like men, adopt it, hold by it, sternly enforce it, till its end has been completely attained—with what results to peace, good will, and freedom I do not now stop to inquire. Our ineffectual and spurious coercion is morally worn out. I give credit to the late Government for their conception of the fact. They must have realized it when they came to the conclusion, in 1885, that they would not propose the renewal or continuance of repressive legislation. They were in a position in which it would have been comparatively easy for them to have proposed it, as a Conservative Government, following in the footsteps of a Liberal Administration. But they determined not to propose it. I wish I could be assured that they and the Party by whom they are supported, were fully aware of the immense historic weight of that determination. I have sometimes heard language used which appears to betoken an idea, on the part of those who use it, that this is a very simple matter—that in one state of facts they judged one way in July, and that in another state of facts they judged another way in January; and that, consequently, the whole ought to be effaced from the minds and memories of men. Depend upon it the effect of that decision of July never can be effaced—it will weigh, it will tell upon the fortunes and circumstances both of England and of Ireland. The return to the ordinary law, I am afraid, cannot be said to have succeeded.

Almost immediately after the lapse of the Crimes Act "Boycotting" increased fourfold. Since that time it has been about stationary; but in October it had increased fourfold, compared with what it was in the month of May. Well, now, if it be true that resolute coercion ought to take the place of irresolute coercion—if it be true that our system, such as I have exhibited it, has been—we may hide it from ourselves, we cannot hide it from the world—a failure in regard to repressive legislation, will that other coercion, which it is possible to conceive, be more successful? I can, indeed, conceive, and in history we may point to circumstances in which coercion of that kind, stern, resolute, consistent, might be, and has been, successful. But it requires, in my judgment, two essential conditions, and these are—the autocracy of Government, and the secrecy of public transactions. With those conditions, that kind of coercion to which I am referring might possibly succeed. But will it succeed in the light of day, and can it be administered by the people of England and Scotland against the people of Ireland by the two nations which, perhaps, above all others upon earth—I need hardly except America—best understand and are most fondly attached to the essential principles of liberty?

Now, I enter upon another proposition to which I hardly expect broad exception can be taken. I will not assume, I will not beg, the question, whether the people of England and Scotland will ever administer that sort of effectual coercion which I have placed in contrast with our timid and hesitating repressive measures; but this I will say, that the people of England and Scotland will never resort to that alternative until they have tried every other. Have they tried every other? Well, some we have tried, to which I will refer. I have been concerned with some of them myself. But we have not yet tried every alternative, because there is one—not unknown to human experience—on the contrary, widely known to various countries in the world, where this dark and difficult problem has been solved by the comparatively natural and simple, though not always easy, expedient of stripping law of its foreign garb, and investing it with a domestic character. I am not saying that this will succeed; I by no means beg the question at this moment; but this I will say, that Ireland, as far as I know, and speaking of the great majority of the people of Ireland, believes it will succeed, and that experience elsewhere supports that conclusion. The case of Ireland, though she is represented here not less fully than England or Scotland, is not the same as that of England or Scotland. England, by her own strength, and by her vast majority in this House, makes her own laws just as independently as if she were not combined with two other countries. Scotland—a small country, smaller than Ireland, but a country endowed with a spirit so masculine that never in the long course of history, excepting for two brief periods, each of a few years, was the superior strength of England such as to enable her to put down the national freedom beyond the border—Scotland, wisely recognized by England, has been allowed and encouraged in this House to make her own laws as freely and as effectually as if she had a representation six times as strong. The consequence is that the mainspring of law in England is felt by the people to be English; the mainspring of law in Scotland is felt by the people to be Scotch; but the mainspring of law in Ireland is not felt by the people to be Irish, and I am bound to say—truth extorts from me the avowal—that it cannot be felt to be Irish in the same sense as it is English and Scotch. The net results of this statement which I have laid before the House, because it was necessary as the groundwork of my argument, are these—in the first place, I admit it to be little less than a mockery to hold that the state of law and of facts conjointly, which I have endeavoured to describe, conduces to the real unity of this great, noble, and world-wide Empire. In the second place, something must be done, something is imperatively demanded from us to restore to Ireland the first conditions of civil life—the free course of law, the liberty of every individual in the exercise of every legal right, the confidence of the people in the law, and their sympathy with the law, apart from which no country can be called, in the full sense of the word, a civilized country, nor can there be given to that country the blessings which it is the object of civilized society to attain. Well, this is my introduction to the task I have to perform, and now I ask attention to the problem we have before us.

It is a problem not unknown in the history of the world; it is really this—there can be no secret about it as far as we are concerned—how to reconcile Imperial unity with diversity of legislation. Mr. Grattan not only held these purposes to be reconcilable, but he did not scruple to go the length of saying this—

> "I demand the continued severance of the Parliaments with a view to the continued and everlasting unity of the Empire."

Was that a flight of rhetoric, an audacious paradox? No; it was the statement of a problem which other countries have solved, and under circumstances much more difficult than ours. We ourselves may be said to have solved it, for I do not think that anyone will question the fact that, out of the six last centuries, for five centuries at least Ireland has had a Parliament separate from ours. That is a fact undeniable. Did that separation of Parliament destroy the unity of the British Empire? Did it destroy it in the 18th century? Do not suppose that I mean that harmony always prevailed between Ireland and England. We know very well there were causes quite sufficient to account for a recurrence of discord. But I take the 18th century alone. Can I be told that there was no unity of Empire in the 18th century? Why, Sir, it was the century which saw our Navy come to its supremacy. It was the century which witnessed the foundation of that great, gigantic manufacturing industry which now overshadows the whole world. It was, in a pre-eminent sense, the century of Empire, and it was in a sense, but too conspicuous, the century of wars. Those wars were carried on, that Empire was maintained and enormously enlarged, that trade was established, that Navy was brought to supremacy when England and Ireland had separate Parliaments. Am I to be told that there was no unity of Empire in that state of things? Well, Sir, what has happened elsewhere? Have any other countries had to look this problem in the face? The last half-century—the last 60 or 70 years since the great war—has been particularly rich in its experience of this subject and in the lessons which it has afforded to us. There are many cases to which I might refer to show how practicable it is, or how practicable it has been found by others whom we are not accustomed to look upon as our political superiors—how practicable it has been found by others to bring into existence what is termed local autonomy, and yet not to sacrifice, but to confirm Imperial unity.

Let us look to those two countries, neither of them very large, but yet countries which every Englishman and every Scotchman must rejoice to claim his kin—I mean the Scandinavian countries of Sweden and Norway. Immediately after the great war the Norwegians were ready to take sword in hand to prevent their coming under the domination of Sweden. But the Powers of Europe undertook the settlement of that question, and they united those countries upon a footing of strict legislative independence and co-equality. Now, I am not quoting this as an exact precedent for us, but I am quoting it as a precedent, and as an argument *à fortiori*, because I say they confronted much greater difficulties, and they had to put a far greater strain upon the unity of their country, than we can ever be called upon to put upon the unity of ours. The Legislatures of Sweden and of Norway are absolutely independent. The law even forbids—what I hope never will happen between England and Ireland—that a Swede, if I am correct in my impression, should bear office of any kind in the Norwegian Ministry. There is no sort of supremacy or superiority in the Legislature of Sweden over the Legislature of Norway. The Legislature of Norway has had serious controversies, not with Sweden, but with the King of Sweden, and it has fought out those controversies successfully upon the strictest Constitutional and Parliamentary grounds. And yet with two countries so united, what has been the effect? Not discord, not convulsions, not danger to peace, not hatred, not aversion, but a constantly growing sympathy; and every man who knows their condition knows that I speak the truth when I say that, in every year that passes, the Norwegians and the Swedes are more and more feeling themselves to be the children of a common country, united by a tie which never is to be broken.

I will take another case—the case of Austria and Hungary. In Austria and Hungary there is a complete duality of power. I will not enter upon the general condition of the Austrian Empire, or upon the other divisions and diversities which it includes, but I will take simply this case. At Vienna sits the Parliament of the Austrian Monarchy; at Buda-Pesth sits the Parliament of the Hungarian Crown; and that is the state of things which was established, I think, nearly 20 years ago. I ask all those who hear me whether there is one among them who doubts? Whether or not the condition of Austria be at this moment, or be not, perfectly solid, secure, and harmonious, after the enormous difficulties she has had to confront, on account of the boundless diversity of race, whether or not that condition be perfectly normal in every minute particular, this, at least, cannot be questioned, that it is a condition of solidity and of safety compared with the time when Hungary made war on her—war which she was unable to quell when she owed the cohesion of the body politic to the interference of Russian arms; or in the interval that followed, when there existed a perfect Legislative Union and a supreme Imperial Council sat in Vienna?

Now, I have quoted these illustrations as illustrations which show, not that what we are called upon to consider can be done, but that infinitely more can be done—has been done—under circumstances far less favourable. What was the state of Sweden and Norway—two small countries, Norway undoubtedly inferior in population, but still unassailable in her mountain fastnesses—what was the case of Sweden and Norway for bringing about a union by physical and material means? There were no means to be used but moral means, and those moral means have been completely successful. What, again, was the case of Austria, where the seat of Empire in the Archduchy was associated not with the majority, but with a minority of the population, and where she had to face Hungary with numbers far greater than her own? Even there, while having to attempt what was infinitely more complex and more dangerous than even prejudice can suppose to be that which I am about to suggest, it is not to be denied that a great relative good and relative success have been attained. Our advantages are immense in a question of this kind. I do not know how many Gentlemen who hear me have read the valuable work of Professor Dicey on the Law of the Constitution. No work that I have ever read brings out in a more distinct and emphatic manner the peculiarity of the British Constitution in one point to which, perhaps, we seldom have occasion to refer—namely, the absolute supremacy of Parliament. We have a Parliament to the power of which there are no limits whatever, except such as human nature in a Divinely-ordained condition of things imposes. We are faced by no co-ordinate Legislatures, and are bound by no statutory conditions. There is nothing that controls us, and nothing that compels us, except our convictions of law, of right, and of justice. Surely that is a favourable point of departure in considering a question such as this.

I have referred to the 18th century. During that century you had beside you a co-ordinate Legislature. The Legislature of Ireland, before the Union, had the same title as that of Great Britain. There was no juridical distinction to be drawn between them. Even in point of antiquity they were as nearly as possible on a par, for the Parliament of Ireland had subsisted for 500 years. It had asserted its exclusive right to make laws for the people of Ireland. That right was never denied, for Gentlemen ought to recollect, but all do not, perhaps, remember, that Poyning's Law was an Irish law imposed by Ireland on herself. That claim of the Parliament of Ireland never was denied until the Reign of George II., and that claim, denied in the Reign of George II., was admitted in the Reign of George III. The Parliament—the great Parliament of Great Britain—had to retract its words, and to withdraw its claim, and the Legislature which goes by the name of Grattan's Parliament was as independent in point of authority as any Legislature over the wide world. We are not called upon to constitute another co-ordinate Legislature. While I think it is right to modify the Union in some particulars, we are not about to propose its repeal.

What is the essence of the Union? That is the question. It is impossible to determine what is and what is not the repeal of the Union, until you settle what is the essence of the Union. Well, I define the essence of the Union to be this—that before the Act of Union there were two independent, separate, coordinate Parliaments; after the Act of Union there was but one. A supreme statutory authority of the Imperial Parliament over Great Britain, Scotland, and Ireland as one United Kingdom was established by the Act of Union. That supreme statutory authority it is not asked, so far as I am aware, and certainly it is not intended, in the slightest degree to impair. When I heard the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), in a very striking speech at the commencement of the Session, ask for what I think he termed local autonomy or Irish autonomy, I felt that something was gained in the conduct of this great question. If he speaks, as I believe he speaks, the mind of the vast majority of the Representatives of Ireland, I feel that we have no right to question for a moment, in this free country, under a representative system, that the vast majority of the Representatives speak the mind of a decided majority of the people. I felt, Sir, that something had been gained. Ireland had come a great way to meet us, and it was more than ever our duty to consider whether we could not go some way to meet her. The term "Dismemberment of the Empire," as applied to anything that is now before us, is, in my judgment—I will not argue it at any length now—simply a misnomer. To speak, in connection with any meditated or possible plan, of the dismemberment of the Empire or the disintegration of the Empire is, in the face of the history of the 18th century, not merely a misnomer, but an absurdity. Some phrases have been used which I will not refer to, simply because I do not think that they quite accurately describe the case, and because they might open the door to new debate. We hear of national independence, we hear of legislative independence, we hear of an independent Parliament, and we hear of Federal arrangements. These are not descriptions which I adopt, or which I find it necessaay to discuss.

Then, again, under a sense of the real necessities of the case, there are Gentlemen who have their own philanthropic, well-intended plans for meeting this emergency. There are those who say—"Let us abolish the Castle;" and I think that Gentlemen of very high authority, who are strongly opposed to giving Ireland a domestic Legislature, have said nevertheless that they think there ought to be a general reconstruction of the administrative Government in Ireland. Well, Sir, I have considered that question much, and what I want to know is this—how, without a change in the Legislature, without giving to Ireland a domestic Legislature, there is to be, or there even can possibly be, a reconstruction of the Administration? We have sent to Ireland, to administer the actual system, the best men we could find. When Lord Spencer undertook that Office, he represented, not in our belief merely, but in our knowledge—for we had known him long—the flower of the British aristocracy, that portion of the British aristocracy which, to high birth and great influence of station, unites a love of liberty and of the people, as genuine as that which breathes within any cottage in the land. And yet, Sir, what is the result? The result is that, after a life of almost unexampled devotion to the Public Service in Ireland, Lord Spencer's Administration not only does not command, which is easily understood, the adhesion and the commendation of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his Colleagues, but it is made the subject of cavil and of censure in this House of Parliament, and from the spot where I now stand, by Members of the late Conservative Government. I want to know—for we have not come to our conclusions without making careful examination of the conclusions of other people—I want to know how it is possible to construct an administrative system in Ireland without legislative change, and what Gentlemen mean when they speak of the administrative system of Ireland? The fault of the administrative system of Ireland, if it has a fault, is simply this—that its spring and source of action, or, if I can use an anatomical illustration without a blunder, what is called the motor muscle is English, and not Irish. Without providing a domestic Legislature for Ireland, without having an Irish Parliament, I want to know how you will bring about this wonderful, superhuman, and, I believe, in this condition, impossible result, that your administrative system shall be Irish, and not English?

There have been several plans liberally devised for granting to Ireland the management of her education, the management of her public works, and the management of one subject and another—boons very important in themselves—under a Central Elective Body; boons, any of which I do not hesitate to say I should have been glad to see accepted, or I should have been glad to see a trial given to a system which might have been constructed under them, had it been the desire and the demand of Ireland. I do not think such a scheme would have possessed the advantage of finality. If it had been accepted, and especially if it had been freely suggested from that quarter—by the Irish Representatives—it might have furnished a useful *modus vivendi.* But it is absurd, in my opinion, to talk of the adoption of such a scheme in the face of two obstacles—first of all, that those whom it is intended to benefit do not want it, do not ask it, and refuse it; and, secondly, the obstacle, not less important, that all those who are fearful of giving a domestic Legislature to Ireland would naturally, emphatically, and rather justly, say—"We will not create your Central Board and palter with this question, because we feel certain that it will afford nothing in this world except a stage from which to agitate for a further concession, and because we see that by the proposal you make you will not even attain the advantage of settling the question that is raised."

Well, Sir, what we seek is the settlement of that question, and we think that we find that settlement in the establishment, by the authority of Parliament, of a Legislative Body sitting in Dublin, for the conduct of both legislation and administration under the conditions which may be prescribed by the Act defining Irish, as distinct from Imperial, affairs. There is the head and front of our offending. Let us proceed to examine the matter a little further. The essential conditions of any plan that Parliament can be asked or could be expected to entertain are, in my opinion, these:—The unity of the Empire must not be placed in jeopardy; the safety and welfare of the whole—if there is an unfortunate conflict, which I do not believe—the welfare and security of the whole must be preferred to the security and advantage of the part. The political equality of the three countries must be maintained. They stand by statute on a footing of absolute equality, and that footing ought not to be altered or brought into question. There should be what I will at present term an equitable distribution of Imperial burdens.

Next I introduce a provision which may seem to be exceptional, but which, in the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, whose history unhappily has been one long chain of internal controversies as well as of external difficulties, is necessary in order that there may be reasonable safeguards for the minority. I am asked why there should be safeguards for the minority. Will not the minority in Ireland, as in other countries, be able to take care of itself? Are not free institutions, with absolute publicity, the best security that can be given to any minority? I know, Sir, that in the long run our experience shows they are. After we have passed through the present critical period, and obviated and disarmed, if we can, the jealousies with which any change is attended, I believe, as most Gentlemen in this House may probably believe, that there is nothing comparable to the healthy action of free discussion, and that a minority asserting in the face of day its natural rights is the best security and guarantee for its retaining them. We have not reached that state of things. I may say, not entering into detail, there are three classes to whom we must look in this case. We must consider—I will not say more on that subject to-day—the class immediately connected with the land. A second question, not, I think, offering any great difficulty, relates to the Civil Service and the offices of the Executive Government in Ireland. The third question relates to what is commonly called the Protestant minority, and especially that important part of the community which inhabits the Province of Ulster, or which predominates in a considerable portion of the Province of Ulster.

I will deviate from my path for a moment to say a word upon the state of opinion in that wealthy, intelligent, and energetic portion of the Irish community which, as I have said, predominates in a certain portion of Ulster. Our duty is to adhere to sound general principles, and to give the utmost consideration we can to the opinions of that energetic minority. The first thing of all, I should say, is that if, upon any occasion, by any individual or section, violent measures have been threatened in certain emergencies, I think the best compliment I can pay to those who have threatened us is to take no notice whatever of the threats, but to treat them as momentary ebullitions, which will pass away with the fears from which they spring, and at the same time to adopt on our part every reasonable measure for disarming those fears. I cannot conceal the conviction that the voice of Ireland, as a whole, is at this moment clearly and Constitutionally spoken. I cannot say it is otherwise when five-sixths of its lawfully-chosen Representatives are of one mind in this matter. There is a counter voice; and I wish to know what is the claim of those by whom that counter voice is spoken, and how much is the scope and allowance we can give them. Certainly, Sir, I cannot allow it to be said that a Protestant minority in Ulster, or elsewhere, is to rule the question at large for Ireland. I am aware of no Constitutional doctrine tolerable on which such a conclusion could be adopted or justified. But I think that the Protestant minority should have its wishes considered to the utmost practicable extent in any form which they may assume.

Various schemes, short of refusing the demand of Ireland at large, have been proposed on behalf of Ulster. One scheme is, that Ulster itself, or, perhaps with more appearance of reason, a portion of Ulster, should be excluded from the operation of the Bill we are about to introduce. Another scheme is, that a separate automomy should be provided for Ulster, or for a portion of Ulster. Another scheme is, that certain rights with regard to certain subjects—such, for example, as education and some other subjects—should be reserved and should be placed, to a certain extent, under the control of Provincial Councils. These, I think, are the suggestions which have reached me in different shapes; there may be others. But what I wish to say of them is this—there is no one of them which has appeared to us to be so completely justified, either upon its merits or by the weight of opinion supporting and recommending it, as to warrant our including it in the Bill and proposing it to Parliament upon our responsibility. What we think is that such suggestions deserve careful and unprejudiced consideration. It may be that that free discussion, which I have no doubt will largely take place after a Bill such as we propose shall have been laid on the Table of the House, may give to one of these proposals, or to some other proposals, a practicable form, and that some such plan may be found to be recommended by a general or predominating approval. If it should be so, it will, at our hands, have the most favourable consideration, with every disposition to do what equity may appear to recommend. That is what I have to say on the subject of Ulster.

I have spoken now of the essential conditions of a good plan for Ireland, and I add only this—that, in order to be a good plan, it must be a plan promising to be a real settlement of Ireland. To show that, without a good plan, you can have no real settlement, I may point to the fact that the great settlement of 1782 was not a real settlement. Most unhappily, Sir, it was not a real settlement; and why was it not a real settlement? Was it Ireland that prevented it from being a real settlement? No, Sir, it was the mistaken policy of England listening to the pernicious voice and claims of ascendancy. It is impossible, however, not to say this word for the Protestant Parliament of Ireland. Founded as it was upon narrow suffrage, exclusive in religion, crowded with pensioners and place-holders, holding every advantage, it yet had in it the spark, at least, and the spirit of true patriotism. It emancipated the Roman Catholics of Ireland when the Roman Catholics of England were not yet emancipated. It received Lord Fitzwilliam with open arms; and when Lord Fitzwilliam promoted to the best of his ability the introduction of Roman Catholics into Parliament, and when his brief career was unhappily intercepted by a peremptory recall from England, what happened? Why, Sir, in both Houses of the Irish Parliament votes were at once passed by those Protestants, by those men, mixed, as they were, with so large an infusion of pensioners and place-men, registering their confidence in that Nobleman, and desiring that he should still be left to administer the government of Ireland. What the Irish Parliament did when Lord Fitzwilliam was promoting the admission of Roman Catholics into Parliament justifies me in saying there was a spirit there which, if free scope had been left to it, would in all probability have been enabled to work out a happy solution for every Irish problem and difficulty, and would have saved to the coming generation an infinity of controversy and trouble.

I pass on to ask how are we to set about the giving effect to the proposition I have made, to the purpose I have defined, of establishing in Ireland a domestic Legislature to deal with Irish as contradistinguished from Imperial affairs? And here, Sir, I am confronted at the outset by what we have felt to be a formidable dilemma. I will endeavour to state and to explain it to the House as well as I can. Ireland is to have a domestic Legislature for Irish affairs. That is my postulate from which I set out. Are Irish Members in this House, are Irish Representative Peers in the other House, still to continue to form part of the respective Assemblies? That is the first question which meets us in consideration of the ground I have opened. Now I think it will be perfectly clear that, if Ireland is to have a domestic Legislature, Irish Peers and Irish Representatives cannot come here to control English and Scotch affairs. That I understand to be admitted freely. I never heard of their urging the contrary, and I am inclined to believe that it would be universally admitted. The one thing follows from the other. There cannot be a domestic Legislature in Ireland, dealing with Irish affairs, and Irish Peers and Irish Representatives sitting in Parliament at Westminster to take part in English and Scotch affairs. My next question is—is it practicable for Irish Representatives to come here for the settlement, not of English or Scotch, but of Imperial affairs? In principle it would be very difficult, I think, to object to that proposition. But then its acceptance depends entirely upon our arriving at the conclusion that, in this House, we can draw for practical purposes a distinction between affairs which are Imperial, and affairs which are not Imperial. It would not be difficult to say in principle that, as the Irish Legislature will have nothing to do with Imperial concerns, let Irish Members come here and vote on Imperial concerns. All depends on the practicability of the distinction. Well, Sir, I have thought much, reasoned much, and inquired much with regard to that distinction. I had hoped it might be possible to draw a distinction, and I have arrived at the conclusion that it cannot be drawn. I believe it passes the wit of man; at any rate, it passes not my wit alone, but the wit of many with whom I have communicated. It would be easy to exhibit a case; but the difficulty, I may say, in my opinion, arises from this. If this were a merely Legislative House, or if the House of Lords were merely a Legislative House—this House, of course, affords the best illustration—I do not think it would be difficult to draw a distinction. We are going to draw the distinction—we have drawn the distinction—in the Bill which I ask leave to lay on the Table for legislative purposes with reference to what I hope will be the domestic Legislature of Ireland. But this House is not merely a Legislative House; it is a House controlling the Executive; and when you come to the control of the Executive, then your distinction between Imperial subjects and non-Imperial subjects totally breaks down—they are totally insufficient to cover the whole case.

For example, suppose it to be a question of foreign policy. Suppose the Irish Members in this House coming here to vote on a question of foreign policy. Is it possible to deny that they would be entitled to take part in discussing an Address to the Crown for the dismissal of the Foreign Minister? It is totally impossible to deny—it is totally impossible to separate—the right of impugning the policy and the right of action against the Minister. Well, Sir, if, on that account, Members might take part in an Address dismissing the Foreign Minister, I want to know, considering the collective responsibility of Government—a principle, I hope, which will always be maintained at the very highest level that circumstances will permit, for I am satisfied that the public honour and the public welfare are closely associated with it—if that be so, what will be the effect of the dismissal of the Foreign Minister on the existence and action of the Government to which he belongs? Why, Sir, the Government in 19 cases out of 20 will break down with the Foreign Minister; and when these Gentlemen, coming here for the purpose of discussing Imperial questions alone, could dislodge the Government which is charged with the entire interests of England and Scotland, I ask you what becomes of the distinction between Imperial and non-Imperial affairs? I believe the distinction to be impossible, and therefore I arrive at the next conclusion—that Irish Members and Irish Peers cannot, if a domestic Legislature be given to Ireland, justly retain a seat in the Parliament at Westminster.

If Irish Members do not sit in this House and Irish Peers do not sit in the other House, how is Ireland to be taxed? I shall assume, as a matter of course, that we should propose that a general power of taxation should pass to the domestic Legislature of Ireland. But there is one very important branch of taxation, involving, indeed, a second branch, which is susceptible of being viewed in a very different aspect from the taxes of Ireland generally. I mean the duties of Customs and duties of Excise relatively to Customs. One thing I take to be absolutely certain. Great Britain will never force upon Ireland taxation without representation. Well, Sir, if we are never to force upon Ireland taxation without representation, then comes another question of the deepest practical interest—Are we to give up the fiscal unity of the Empire? I sometimes see it argued that, in giving up the fiscal unity of the Empire, we should give up the unity of the Empire. To that argument I do not subscribe. The unity of the Empire rests upon the supremacy of Parliament, and on considerations much higher than considerations merely fiscal. But I must admit that, while I cannot stand on the high ground of principle, yet, on the very substantial ground of practice, to give up the fiscal unity of the Empire would be a great public inconvenience, and a very great public misfortune—a very great public misfortune for Great Britain; and I believe it would be a still greater misfortune for Ireland were the fiscal unity of the Empire to be put to hazard and practically abandoned. I may say also, looking as I do with hope to the success of the measure I now propose, I, at any rate, feel the highest obligation not to do anything, not to propose anything, without necessity, that would greatly endanger the right comprehension of this subject by the people of England and Scotland, which might be the case were the fiscal unity of the Empire to be broken.

There is the dilemma. I conceive that there is but one escape from it, and that is, if there were conditions upon which Ireland consented to such arrangements as would leave the authority of levying Customs duties and such Excise duties as are immediately connected with Customs in the hands of Parliament here, and would, by her will, consent to set our hands free to take the course that the general exigencies of the case appear to require. These conditions I take to be three:—In the first place, that a general power of taxation over and above these particular duties should pass unequivocally into the hands of the domestic Legislature of Ireland. In the second place, that the entire proceeds of the Customs and Excise should be held for the benefit of Ireland, for the discharge of the obligations of Ireland, and for the payment of the balance, after discharging those obligations, into an Irish Exchequer, to remain at the free disposal of the Irish Legislative Body.

But there is another point which I think ought to engage, and may justly engage, the anxious attention in particular of the Representatives of Ireland; and it is this:—The proposal which I have now sketched is that we should pass an Act giving to Ireland what she considers an enormous boon, under the name of a statutory Parliament for the control of Irish affairs, both legislative and administrative. But one of the provisions of that Act is the withdrawal of Irish Representative Peers from the House of Lords, and Irish Members from the House of Commons. Well, then, I think it will naturally occur to the Irish, as it would in parallel circumstances to the Scotch or the English—and more especially to the Scotch—mind, what would become of the privileges conveyed by the Act after the Scotch Members, who were their natural guardians, were withdrawn from Parliament? [An hon. MEMBER: The Irish Members.] I was speaking of the Scotch Members in order to bring it very distinctly to the minds of hon. Members, supposing Scotland had entertained—what she has never had reason to entertain—the desire for a domestic Legislature. I must confess I think that Ireland ought to have security on that subject—security that advantage would not be taken, so far as we can preclude the possibility of it, of the absence of Irish Representatives from Parliament, for the purpose of tampering with any portion of the boon which we propose to confer on Ireland by this Act. I think we have found a method for dealing with that difficulty. I may be very sanguine, but I hope that the day may come when Ireland would have reason to look on this Act, if adopted by Parliament, as for practical purposes her Magna Charta. A Magna Charta for Ireland ought to be most jealously and effectively assured, and it will be assured, against unhallowed and unlawful interference.

Two cases at once occur to the mind. There might be alterations of detail in a law of this kind on which everybody might be agreed. We think it would be very absurd to require either the construction or reconstruction of a cumbrous and difficult machinery for the purpose of disposing of cases of this kind, and therefore we propose that the provisions of this Act might be modified with the concurrence of the Irish Legislature, or in conformity with an Address from the Irish Legislature. That is intended for cases where there is a general agreement. I hope it will not happen, but I admit it might happen, that in some point or other the foresight and sagacity now brought to bear on this subject might prove insufficient. It is possible, though I trust it is not probable, that material alterations might be found requisite, that on these Amendments there might be differences of opinion; and yet, however improbable the case may be, it is a case which it might be proper to provide for beforehand. What we then should propose is that the provisions of this Act should not be altered, except either on an Address from the Irish Legislature to the Crown such as I have described, or else, after replacing and recalling into action the full machinery under which Irish Representatives now sit here, and Irish Peers sit in the House of Lords, so that, when their case again came to be tried, they might have the very same means of defending their Constitutional rights as they have now. Now, we believe that is one of those cases which are often best averted by making a good provision against them.

Now, upon the footing which I have endeavoured to describe we propose to relieve Irish Peers and Representatives from attendance at Westminster, and at the same time to preserve absolutely the fiscal unity of the Empire. Let me say that there are several reasons that occur to me which might well incline the prudence of Irishmen to adopt an arrangement of this kind. If there were Irish Representatives in this House at the same time that a domestic Legislature sat in Ireland, I think that the presence of those Irish Representatives would have some tendency to disparage the domestic Legislature. I think there would be serious difficulties that would arise besides the insurmountable difficulty that I have pointed out as to the division of subjects. Even if it were possible to divide the subjects, what an anomaly it would be, what a mutilation of all our elementary ideas about the absolute equality of Members in this House, were we to have ordinarily among us two classes of Members, one of them qualified to vote on all kinds of Business, and another qualified only to vote here and there on particular kinds of Business, and obliged to submit to some criterion or other—say, the authority of the Chair—novel for such a purpose, and difficult to exercise—in order to determine what kinds of Business they could vote upon, and what kinds of Business they must abstain from voting on! There would, I think, be another difficulty in determining what the number of those Members should be. My opinion is that there would be great jealousy of the habitual presence of 103 Irish Members in this House, even for limited purposes, after a Legislative Body had been constructed in Ireland; and, on the other hand, I can very well conceive that Ireland would exceedingly object to the reduction—the material reduction—of those Members. I am sorry to have to mention another difficulty, which is this—Ireland has not had the practice in local self-government that has been given to England and Scotland. We have, unfortunately, shut her out from that experience. In some respects we have been jealous, in others niggardly, towards Ireland. It might be very difficult for Ireland, in the present state of things, to man a Legislative Chamber in Dublin, and at the same time to present in this House an array of so much distinguished ability as, I think, all Parties will admit has been exhibited on the part of Ireland during recent Parliaments on the Benches of this House.

But I pass on from this portion of the question, having referred to these two initiatory propositions as principal parts of the foundation of the Bill—namely, first that it is proposed that the Irish Representation in Parliament at Westminster should cease, unless in the contingent, and I hope hardly possible, case to which I have alluded; and, next, that the fiscal unity of the Empire shall be absolutely maintained. My next duty is to state what the powers of the proposed Legislative Body will be.

The capital article of that Legislative Body will be that it should have the control of the Executive Government of Ireland as well as of legislative Business. Evidently, I think, it was a flaw in the system of 1782 that adequate provision was not made for that purpose; and we should not like to leave a flaw of such a nature in the work we are now undertaking. In 1782 there were difficulties that we have not now before us. At that time it might have been very fairly said that no one could tell how a separate Legislature would work unless it had under its control what is termed a responsible Government. We have no such difficulty and no such excuse now. The problem of responsible Government has been solved for us in our Colonies. It works very well there; and in, perhaps, a dozen cases in different quarters of the globe it works to our perfect satisfaction. It may be interesting to the House if I recount the fact that that responsible Government in the Colonies was, I think, first established by one of our most distinguished statesmen, Earl Russell, when he held the Office of Colonial Secretary in the Government of Lord Melbourne. But it was a complete departure from established tradition; and, if I remember right, not more than two or three years before that generous and wise experiment was tried, Lord Russell had himself written a most able despatch to show that it could not be done; that with responsible Government in the Colonies you would have two centres of gravity and two sources of motion in the Empire; while a United Empire absolutely required that there should be but one, and that consequently the proposition could not be entertained. Such was the view of the question while it was yet at a distance; and such, perhaps, may have been our view on the subject I am now discussing while it was yet at a distance. But it has been brought near to us by the circumstances of the late Election; and I believe that if we look closely at its particulars we should find that many of the fears with which we may have regarded it are perfectly unreal, and especially so that great panic, that great apprehension of all, the fear lest it should prove injurious to what it is our first duty to maintain—namely, the absolute unity and integrity of the Empire.

There is another point, in regard to the powers of the Legislative Body, of which I wish to make specific mention. Two courses might have been followed. One would be to endow this Legislative Body with particular legislative powers. The other is to except from the sphere of its action those subjects which we think ought to be excepted, and to leave it everything else which is the consequence of the plans before us. There will be an enumeration of disabilities, and everything not included in that enumeration will be left open to the domestic Legislature. As I have already said, the administrative power by a responsible Government would pass under our proposals with the legislative power. Then, Sir, the Legislative Body would be subject to the provisions of the Act, in the first place, as to its own composition. But we propose to introduce into it what I would generally explain as two Orders, though not two Houses; and we suggest that with regard to the popular Order, which will be the more numerous, the provisions of the Act may be altered at any period after the first Dissolution; but with regard to the other and less numerous Order, the provisions of the Act can only be altered after the assent of the Crown to an Address from the Legislative Body for that purpose. We should provide generally—and on that I conceive there would be no difference of opinion—that this Body should be subject to all the Prerogatives of the Crown, but only should insert a particular provision to the effect that its maximum duration, without Dissolution, should not exceed five years.

I will now tell the House—and I would beg particular attention to this—what are the functions that we propose to withdraw from the cognizance of this Legislative Body. The three grand and principal functions are, first, everything that relates to the Crown—Succession, Prerogatives, and the mode of administering powers during incapacity, Regency, and, in fact, all that belongs to the Crown. The next would be all that belongs to defence—the Army, the Navy, the entire organization of armed force. I do not say the Police Force, which I will touch upon by-and-by, but everything belonging to defence. And the third would be the entire subject of Foreign and Colonial relations. Those are the subjects most properly Imperial, and I will say belonging, as a principle, to the Legislature established under the Act of Union and sitting at Westminster. There are some other subjects which I will briefly touch upon. In the first place, it would not be competent to the domestic Legislature in Ireland to alter the provisions of the Act which we are now about to pass, as I hope, and which I ask that we should pass with the consent of the three countries—it would not be competent to the Irish Legislative Body to alter those provisions, excepting in points where they are designedly left open as part of the original contract and settlement. We do not propose universal disability as to contracts; but there are certain contracts made in Ireland under circumstances so peculiar that we think we ought to except them from the action of the Legislative Body. There are also some analogous provisions made in respect to Charters anterior to the Act which, in our opinion, ought only to be alterable after the assent of the Crown to an Address from the Legislative Body for that purpose. There is another disability that we propose to lay upon the Legislative Body; and it is one of those with respect to which I am bound to say, in my belief, there is no real apprehension that the thing would be done; but, at the same time, though there may not be a warranted apprehension, there are many honest apprehensions which it is our duty to consider as far as we can. We propose to provide that the Legislative Body should not be competent to pass a law for the establishment or the endowment of any particular religion. Those I may call exceptions of principle. Then there are exceptions of what I may call practical necessity for ordinary purposes. The first of those is the Law of Trade and Navigation. I assume that, as to Trade and Navigation at large, it would be a great calamity to Ireland to be separated from Great Britain. The question of taxation in relation to Trade and Navigation I have already mentioned. The same observation applies to the subject of Coinage and Legal Tender; but we do not propose to use the term "currency," simply because there is an ambiguity about it. Ireland might think fit to pass a law providing for the extinction of private issues in Ireland, and that no bank notes should be issued in Ireland, except under the authority and for the advantage of the State. I own it is my opinion that Ireland would do an extremely sensible thing if she passed such a law. It is my most strong and decided opinion that we ought to have the same law ourselves; but the block of Business has prevented that, and many other good things, towards the attainment of which I hope we are now going to open and clear the way. I only use that as an illustration to show that I should be very sorry if we were needlessly to limit the free action of the Irish Legislature upon Irish matters. There are other subjects on which I will not dwell. One of them is the subject of Weights and Measures; another is the subject of Copyright. These are not matters for discussion at the present moment.

There is, however, one other important subject with regard to which we propose to leave it entirely open to the judgment of Ireland—that subject is the Post Office. Our opinion is that it would be for the convenience of both countries if the Post Office were to remain under the control of the Postmaster General; but the Post Office requires an army of servants, and I think that Ireland might not wish to see all the regulations connected with that unarmed army left to an English authority. We have, therefore, placed the Post Office in the Bill under circumstances which would enable the Legislative Body in Ireland to claim for itself authority on this subject if it should see fit. There are some other matters, such as the Census, the Quarantine Laws, and one or two others which stand in the same category. Now, Sir, that I believe I may give as a sufficient description of the exceptions from the legislative action of the proposed Irish Legislature, bearing in mind the proposition that everything which is not excepted is conferred. I have dealt with the powers of the Legislative Body.

I come next to the composition of the Legislative Body. We propose to provide for it as follows. I have referred to the protection of minorities. We might constitute a Legislative Body in Ireland by a very brief enactment if we were to say that the 103 Members now representing Ireland and 103 more Members, perhaps elected by the same constituencies, should constitute the one and only Legislative House in Ireland, without the introduction of what I may call the dual element. But, Sir, we are of opinion that if a proposition of that kind were made, in the first place it would be stated that it did not afford legitimate protection for minorities. And, in the second place, it might be thought by many of those who would be less sensitive on the subject of minorities that some greater provision was required for stability and consistency, in the conduct of the complex work of legislation, than could possibly be supplied by a single set of men elected under an absolutely single influence. Upon that account, Sir, we propose to introduce into this Legislative Body what we have termed two Orders. These Orders would sit and deliberate together. There would be a power on the demand of either Order for separate voting. The effect of that separate voting would be that while the veto was in force, while it sufficed to bar the enactment of a Bill, there would be an absolute veto of one Order upon the other. Such veto, in our view, might be salutary and useful for the purpose of insuring deliberation and consistency with adequate consideration in the business of making laws. But it ought not to be perpetual. If it were perpetual, a block would arise, as it might arise conceivably, and as really, we may almost say, we have seen it arise in certain cases in the Colonies, particularly in one where there were two perfectly independent Orders. What we, therefore, propose is that this veto can only be operative for a limited time, say until a Dissolution, or for a period of three years, whichever might be the longer of the two.

So much, Sir, for the relation of these two Orders, the one to the other. I may observe that that distinction of Orders would be available, and is almost necessary, with a view to maintaining the only form of control over the Judicial Body known to us in this country—namely, the concurrence of two authorities chosen under somewhat different influences in one common conclusion with regard to the propriety of removing a Judge from his office.

Now, Sir, I will just describe very briefly the composition of these Orders. It may not have occurred to many Gentlemen that if we succeed in the path we are now opening, with respect to the 28 distinguished individuals who now occupy the place of Representative Peers of Ireland, it will not be possible, we think, for them to continue to hold their places in the House of Lords after the Irish Representatives have been removed from attending the House of Commons. I do not say that the precedent is an exact one; but the House may remember that, in the case of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, we did disable the Bishops who were entitled to sit for life from continuing—I mean disable them personally from continuing—to sit in the House of Lords after the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. We do not wish, Sir, to entail this personal disability. We propose that these 28 Peers shall have the option of sitting, if they think fit, as a portion of the first Order in the Irish Legislative Assembly. And that they shall have the power—that they shall personally have the power—of sitting there, as they sit in the House of Lords, for life. There may, Sir, be those who think this option will not be largely used. I am not one of that number. I believe that the Irish Peers have an Irish as well as an Imperial patriotism. In the 18th century Irish Peers were not ashamed of the part they played in the Irish Parliament. It was, I think, the Duke of Leinster who moved the Address in the Irish House of Peers, which he carried, expressing the confidence of that House in Lord Fitzwilliam. I may be too sanguine; but I say boldly that if this measure pass under happy circumstances, especially if it pass without political exasperation, one of its effects will be a great revival of the local, as well as a great confirmation and extension of Imperial patriotism. At any rate, it is our duty, I think, to provide that the Irish Peers, the 28 Representative Irish Peers, may form part of the Irish Legislative Body. There will be no disability entailed upon any Irish Peer from being at once a Member of the Irish Legislative Body and likewise of the House of Lords. In the last century many distinguished men sat in both; and, in the circumstances, we certainly see no cause for putting an end to the double qualification which was thus enjoyed, and which, I think, worked beneficially. There is a difficulty, however, to which I will just advert for one moment in combining the connection or place of these 28 Peers who are to sit for life with the rest of the first Order of the Chamber. We propose, as to the remainder of the first Order, that it shall consist of 75 Members, to be elected by the Irish people under conditions which we propose to specify in the Schedule to the Act, not yet filled up as to its details. But I mention at once the two provisions which would apply to the election of 75 Members. First of all, the constituency would be a constituency composed of persons occupying to the value of £25 and upwards; and, secondly, they would be elected for a period, as a general rule, of 10 years, with a little exception I need not now refer to. Thirdly, they will be elected subject to a property qualification of realty to the extent of £200 a-year, or of personalty to the extent of £200 a-year, or a capital value of £4,000. The Peers would ultimately be replaced by 28 Members, elected under the above conditions. We cannot insure that all these 28 Peers shall die at the same time. It would, consequently, be extremely difficult to devise an electoral machinery for the purpose of supplying their places by election. We therefore propose to grant to the Crown power, limited to a term which we think may fairly well exhaust the present generation, of filling their places, by nomination, not for life, but down to the date to be fixed by the Act. After the system had ceased to operate, and the Representative Peers had ceased to be in that first Order, the first Order of the Legislative Body would be elected entirely upon the basis I have described.

With regard to the second Order, its composition would be simple. Of course, it would be proposed to the 103 Gentlemen who now represent Ireland in this House from county districts, from citizen towns, and from the University of Dublin, that they should take their places in the Irish Legislative Chamber in Dublin. We should likewise propose, as nearly as possible, to duplicate that Body. Another 101 Members, not 103, we propose should be elected by the county districts and the citizen towns in exactly the same manner as that in which the present 101 Members for counties and towns have been elected. We shall also propose that in the event of any refusal to sit, refusals to accept the option given, the place shall be filled up by election under the machinery now existing. I ought to say a word about Dublin University. We do not propose to interfere by any action of ours with the existing arrangements of Dublin University in one way or another. But certainly we could not ask the House to adopt a plan at our suggestion which would double the representation of Dublin University. We propose to leave it as it is, but, at the same time, to empower the Legislative Body, if it should think fit, to appoint a corresponding representation by two Members in favour of the Royal University of Ireland. There would be no compulsion to exercise that power; but it would be left to the discretion of the Legislative Body. The effect of that would be to give to the first Order of the proposed Legislative Chamber or Body a number making 103; to give to the second Order the number of 206 at the outside, or 204 if the power of the Royal University were not exercised, and to leave the relations of the two Orders upon the footing which I have described.

I must now say a few words upon the subject of the Executive; and what we think most requisite with regard to the Executive is that our Act should be as elastic as possible. It is quite evident that, though the legislative transition can be made, and ought to be made, *per saltum*, by a single stroke, the Executive transition must necessarily be gradual. We propose, therefore, Sir, to leave everything as it is until it is altered in the regular course; so that there shall be no breach of continuity in the Government of the country, but that by degrees, as may be arranged by persons whom we feel convinced will meet together in a spirit of co-operation, and will find no great, much less insurmountable, difficulty in their way, the old state of things shall be adjusted to the new. On the one hand, the Representatives of the old system will remain on the ground; on the other hand, the principle of responsible Government is freely and fully conceded. That principle of responsible Government will work itself out in every necessary detail. It has often, Sir, been proposed to abolish the Viceroyalty, and some Gentlemen have even been sanguine enough to believe that to abolish the Viceroyalty was to solve the whole Irish problem. I must say that I think that that involves a faculty of belief far beyond any power either of the understanding or imagination to which I have ever been able to aspire. We propose to leave the Viceroyalty without interference by the Act, except in the particulars which I am about to name. The Office of the Viceroyalty will only be altered by statute. He would not be the Representative of a Party. He would not quit Office with the outgoing Government. He would have round him, as he has now, in a certain form, a Privy Council, to aid and to advise him. Within that Privy Council the Executive Body would form itself under the action of the principal responsible Government, for the purpose of administering the various Offices of the State. The Queen would be empowered to delegate to him in case his Office should be permanently continued—which I am far from believing to be unlikely—any of the Prerogatives which she now enjoys, or which she would exercise under this Act; and, finally, we have not forgotten that his Office almost alone is still affected by one solitary outstanding religious disability—a kind of Lot's wife, when everything else has been destroyed—and that religious disability we propose by our Bill to remove.

The next point is with regard to the Judges of the Superior Courts, and here I draw a partial distinction between the present and the future Judges. As regards the Judges of the Superior Courts now holding office, we desire to secure to them their position and their emoluments in the same absolute form as that in which they now exist. Although they would become chargeable upon the Consolidated Fund of Ireland, which we propose to constitute by the Act, still they would retain their lien—so to call it—on the Consolidated Fund of Great Britain. Under the peculiar circumstances of Ireland we cannot forget that some of these Judges, by no fault of their own, have been placed in relations more or less uneasy with popular influences, and with what, under the new Constitution, will in all probability be the dominating influence in that country. We cannot overlook the peculiarities of Irish history in framing the provisions of this Bill; and we therefore propose, both with regard to the Judges now holding office and with regard to other persons who, in what they deemed loyal service to the Empire, have been concerned in the administration and conduct of the Criminal Law in Ireland, that Her Majesty may, not lightly or wholesale, but if she should see cause on any particular occasion, by Order in Council antedate the pensions of these particular persons. With regard to the future Judges, we hold the matter to be more simple. We propose to provide that they should hold office during good behaviour; that their salaries—these are the superior Judges alone—should be charged on the Irish Consolidated Fund; that they shall be removable only on a Joint Address from thet wo Orders of the Legislative Body; and that they should be appointed under the influence, as a general rule, of the responsible Irish Government. There is an exception which we propose to make in regard to the Court of Exchequer, which is a Court of Revenue Pleas. I will not enter into any details now, but the enormous financial relations which will subsist between Great Britain and Ireland, if our measure be carried, made us feel, for reasons which I shall, perhaps, on another occasion more fully explain, that it is necessary for us to keep a certain amount of hold on the Court of Exchequer, or, at least, on two of its Members; but the general rule of our measure will be that the action of the Judges will pass under the new Irish Executive, and will rest with them, just as it rested in former times with the old Irish Executive.

I must now say a few words on the important subject of the Irish Constabulary. The substance of those words really amounts to this—that I think there remains much for consideration in order to devise the details of a good and prudent system; but we think it our first duty to give a distinct assurance to the present members of that distinguished and admirable force that their condition will not be put to prejudice by this Act, either in respect of their terms of office, their terms of service, or with regard to the authority under which they are employed. The case of the Dublin police is not quite the same; but we propose the same conditions with regard to the Dublin police, as far, at least, as the terms of service are concerned. With regard to the local police I will say nothing, because I do not want at present to anticipate what may be matter hereafter for free consideration or discussion, or for the action of the Irish Legislative Body. There will be no breach of continuity in the administration with regard to the police. One thing I cannot omit to say. The Constabulary, as I have said, is an admirable force, and I do not intend to qualify in the smallest degree what I have already said; but the Constabulary on its present footing exhibits one of the most remarkable instances of waste of treasure and of enormous expense, not with good results, but with unhappy results, with which, and under which, the civil government and the general government of Ireland have hitherto been carried on. The total charge of the Constabulary amounts to £1,500,000, including the Dublin police. Now, Ireland is a cheaper country than England, and if the service were founded on the same principle and organized in the same manner, it ought, per 1,000 of the population, to be cheaper in Ireland than in England, assuming Ireland to be in a normal condition; and our object is to bring it into a normal condition.

Now, the House will, perhaps, be surprised when I tell them this—the present Constabulary of Ireland costs £1,500,000 a-year, every penny of it now paid out of the British Exchequer. If the police of Ireland were organized upon the same principles and on the same terms as the police in England, instead of costing £1,500,000, it would cost £600,000 a-year. That will convey to the House an idea, first, of the enormous charge at which we have been governing Ireland under our present system; and, secondly, of the vast field for judicious reductions which the system I am now proposing ought to offer to the Irish people. I anticipate a vast reduction, both in the force and in the expenditure. The charge is now £1,500,000. We propose that the Consolidated Fund of Great Britain—this subject I shall revert to in the financial statement which I shall have to put before the House—shall for a time relieve the Irish Legislative Body of all expenditure in excess of £1,000,000. I am bound to say that I do not look upon £1,000,000 as the proper charge to be imposed on Ireland. I am perfectly, convinced, however, that the charge will be reduced to a much smaller sum, of which Ireland, of course, will reap the benefit. After two years the Legislative Body may fix the charge for the whole police and for the Constabulary of Ireland, with a saving of existing rights. One thing I must say. We have no desire to exempt the police of Ireland in its final form from the ultimate control of the Legislative Body. We have no jealousies on the subject; and I own I have a strong personal opinion that, when once the recollection of the old antipathies has been effectually abated, the care of providing for the ordinary security of life and property of the citizens will be regarded as the very first duty of any good local Government in Ireland. I think it will be understood from what I have stated that the Constabulary would remain under the present terms of service and under the present authority, although I do not say that this is to be so for ever. Assuming control over the Constabulary, that control will be prospective, and will not import any injury to existing rights.

With respect to the Civil Service, of course the future Civil Service of the country generally will be absolutely under the Legislative Body. With respect to the present Civil Service, we have not thought that their case was exactly analogous either to the Constabulary or the Judicial Offices, and yet it is a great transition, and moreover it will, without doubt, be the desire of the

Legislative Body of Ireland forthwith, or very early, to effect a great economy in its establishment. We have, therefore, considered to some extent in what way we can at once provide what is just for the Civil Servants of Ireland, and, at the same time, set free the hands of the Legislative Body to proceed with this salutary work of economy and retrenchment. Our opinion is that, upon the whole, it will be wise in the joint interests of both to authorize the Civil Servants now serving to claim the gratuity or pension which would be due to them upon the abolition of their offices, provided they shall serve not less than two years, to prevent an inconvenient lapse in the practical business of the country, and at the close of those two years both parties would be free to negotiate afresh, the Civil Servants not being bound to remain, and the Legislative Body not being in any way bound to continue to employ them. That is all I have to say upon the subject of the new Irish Constitution.

I am afraid I have still many subjects on which I have some details to show, and I fear I have already detained the House too long. I have now, Sir, to give a practical exposition of the phrase which I have used, that we looked upon it as an essential condition of our plan that there should be an equitable distribution of Imperial charges. The meaning of that is, what proportion shall Ireland pay? I must remind Gentlemen, before I enter upon the next explanation, that the proportion to be paid is not the only thing to be considered; you have to consider the basis upon which that proportionate payment is to be applied. Looking upon the proportionate payment, we now stand thus. At the time of the Union it was intended that Ireland should pay 2-17ths, or in the relation of 1 to 7½ out of the total charge of the United Kingdom. The actual true payment now made by the Irish taxpayer is not 1 to 7½, but something under 1 to 12, or about 1 to 11½—that is the total expenditure. The proposal I make is that the proportion chargeable to Ireland shall be 1 to 14, or 1-15th; but that will not be understood until I come to join it with other particulars. I will look, however, Sir, a little to the question what are the best tests of capacity to pay. Many of these tests have been suggested—one of them is the Income Tax, which I conceive to be a very imperfect indication. The Income Tax, I believe, would give a proportion, not of 1 to 14, but of 1 to 19. This is to be borne in mind, if you have regard to the Income Tax—that while, on the one hand, it is paid in Ireland upon a lower valuation than in England or in Scotland—because, as we all know, in England Schedule A is levied on the full rent—it is also unquestionable that many Irishmen also hold securities upon which dividends are received in London and pay Income Tax, I hope, before the dividends come into the hands of the persons entitled to them. Therefore, it is almost a certainty that a considerable sum ought to be added to the Irish Income Tax, which would raise it from the proportion of 1 to 19 to, perhaps, 1 to 17. But there are two other tests which I consider far superior to the Income Tax. One is the test afforded us by the Death Duties, not by the amount levied, because the amounts levied vary capriciously according to the consanguinity scale, but by the property passing under the Death Duties. The amount of property on which, on an average of three years, the Death Duties fell was for Great Britain £170,000,000, and for Ireland £12,908,000, or 1 to 13. I have taken three years, because they represent the period since we entered upon a somewhat new administration of the Death Duties, and that is by far the best basis of comparison. When we come to the valuation, inasmuch as Ireland is valued much lower in proportion to the real value than England and Scotland, the valuation in the latest year for which we have Returns is in Great Britain £166,000,000, and for Ireland £13,833,000, giving a proportion of 1 to 12, or 1-13th.

Under these circumstances, what ought we to do? In my opinion, we ought to make for Ireland an equitable arrangement, and I think that when I propose to assume the proportion of 1-15th, it will be seen that that is an equitable or even generous arrangement, after I have mentioned three considerations. The first of these considerations is that if we start an Irish Legislative Body, we must start it with some balance to its credit. But if we are to start it with a balance to its credit, I know of no way except the solitary £20,000 a-year which still remains to be worked out of the Church surplus after all the demands made upon it. I know of no way of honestly manufacturing that balance except by carving it out of the Budget for the coming year, and providing for the sum at the expense, as it will then be, not of the Irish Exchequer exclusively, but at the expense of the English and Scotch taxpayers. That is one consideration; the second consideration is this—I take this 1 to 14 or 1-15th for the purpose of ascertaining what share Ireland is to pay to the Imperial expenditure. But when I said that Ireland now pays 1 to 11½ or 1 to 12½ of the Imperial expenditure, I meant the amount of the whole gross Imperial expenditure; and when I say that we shall ask her to pay 1-15th of the Imperial expenditure in the future, that is an Imperial expenditure very materially cut down. For, upon consideration, it has been thought right, in computing the military expenditure, to exclude from it altogether what ought strictly to be called War Charges. We do not propose to assume, in fixing the future Imperial contribution of Ireland, to base that calculation on the supposition of her sharing in charges analogous, for example, to the Vote of Credit for £11,000,000 last year. Therefore, this proportion of 1-15th is to be applied to a scale of Imperial expenditure materially reduced.

But, Sir, there is another consideration which I think it right to mention. It is this—that this Imperial contribution would be paid by Ireland out of a fund composed, in the first instance, of the entire receipts paid into the Irish Exchequer; but that, Sir, is not a true test of the amount of taxation paid by Ireland. There are goods which pay duty in England, and which are exported, duty paid, to Ireland, which are consumed in Ireland, and upon which, therefore, the duty is really paid by Irishmen, while the receipts go into the Imperial Exchequer. But there is not only a corresponding movement the other way, but there is a movement very much larger and more important. More than £1,000,000 of duty—I think £1,030,000—is paid upon spirits in Ireland that are exported to Great Britain. Every shilling of that duty is really paid by the Englishman and the Scotchman; but, at the same time, the whole receipts go into the Irish Exchequer. The same thing holds with respect to the porter brewed in Ireland. The same thing holds with regard to the very considerable manufacture of tobacco carried on in Ireland. We have made it the object of our best efforts to ascertain how much money Ireland loses to England by the process which I have described—and which I have no doubt is accurately understood by all Members of the House—how much money Ireland loses to Great Britain by the flow of duty-paid commodities from Great Britain to Ireland; and how much Great Britain loses to Ireland from the flow of such commodities from Ireland to Great Britain. The result of this investigation is—I state it with confidence, not actually as if it were to be demonstrated in every point by Parliamentary Returns, but I state it as a matter of certainty with regard to a far greater portion of the sum, and as a matter certainly subject to very little doubt—that the Irish receipt gains from Great Britain by the process I have described more than Great Britain gains from Ireland, and more, to no less an amount than £1,400,000, paid by the British taxpayer, and forming part of the Irish receipt. If you maintain the fiscal unity of the Empire, if you do not erect—which I trust you will not erect—Custom Houses between Great Britain and Ireland, if you let things take their natural course, according to the ordinary and natural movement of trade, £1,400,000 will be paid to the benefit of Ireland as a charge upon the English and Scotch taxpayer, and will form a portion of the fund out of which Ireland will defray the Imperial contribution which we propose to levy upon her.

If this amount of Imperial contribution to be paid by Ireland, which I have described as 1-14th, comes to be reduced by subtracting this sum of £1,400,000, the portion which Ireland will have to pay will be, not 1-14th, but a fraction under 1-26th. That is a very great change. It is a benefit she gets, not only in the state of the law, but owing to the course of trade. We cannot take it away without breaking up the present absolute freedom between the two countries. I hope this will be borne in mind by those who think this charge of 1-15th is a heavy charge to be thrown upon Ireland; and by those who think, as I certainly do, that in a case of this kind, after all that has occurred, when two countries are very strong and very rich compared with a third of far more restricted means, the pecuniary arrangement ought to be equitable and even bountiful in some moderate degree. It will be interesting to the House to know what payment *per capita* the plan I have described will allot to the Irishman and to the Briton respectively. I use the word "Briton" because I know that it will gratify my Friends from Scotland. The incidence of this plan *per capita* I will state as follows:—In the first place, if I were to take the present contribution of Ireland to the entire expenditure of the country according to the receipt into the two Exchequers, the inhabitant in Great Britain pays £2 10*s*. *per capita*, and the inhabitant in Ireland £1 13*s*. 7*d*. That is obviously and inequitably high for Ireland. But if I take the real payment of the Irish taxpayer and compare that with the real payment of the English taxpayer, it will follow that the English payment is £2 10*s*. 11*d*. as against £1 7*s*. 10*d*. of Ireland, which is certainly a more equitable proportion.

Now I pass to the basis of 1-14th or 1-15th. This is not founded upon the total expenditure of the country; but upon what we are about to reckon as Imperial expenditure, and the respective contribution to the Imperial Exchequer. The respective contribution *per capita* will be for Great Britain £1 10*s*. 11*d*., and for Ireland 13*s*. 5*d*., and I do not think that that is an inequitable arrangement. I wish to exhibit exactly what alterations we propose to make. Under the proportion now proposed Ireland will pay 13*s*. 5*d*.; while, if the present proportion were maintained, she would pay 16*s*. 10*d*., which will be a very considerable diminution in the amount of her contribution *per capita*.

I will state only one other striking fact with regard to the Irish expenditure. The House would like to know what an amount has been going on—and which at this moment is going on —of what I must call not only a waste of public money, but a demoralizing waste of public money, demoralizing in its influence upon both countries. The civil charges *per capita* at this moment are in Great Britain 8*s*. 2*d*. and in Ireland 16*s*. They have increased in Ireland in the last 15 years by 63 per cent, and my belief is that if the present legislative and administrative systems be maintained, you must make up your minds to a continued, never-ending, and never-to-be-limited, augmentation. The amount of the Irish contribution upon the basis I have described would be as follows:—1-15th of the annual Debt charge of £22,000,000 would be £1,466,000; 1-15th of the Army and Navy charge, after excluding what we call War Votes, and also excluding the charges for Volunteers and Yeomanry, would be £1,666,000; and the amount of the Civil charges, which are properly considered Imperial, would entail upon Ireland £110,000, or a total charge properly Imperial of £3,242,000. I am now ready to present what I may call an Irish Budget—a debtor and creditor account for the Irish Exchequer. The Customs produce in Ireland a gross sum of £1,880,000, the Excise £4,300,000, the Stamps £600,000, the Income Tax £550,000, and Non-Tax Revenue, including the Post Office, £1,020,000. And perhaps here, again, I ought to mention, as an instance of the demoralizing waste which now attends Irish administration, that which will, perhaps, surprise the House to know—namely, that while in England and Scotland we levy from the Post Office and Telegraph system a large surplus income, in Ireland the Post Office and the Telegraphs just pay their expenses, or leave a surplus so small as not to be worth mentioning. I call that a very demoralizing way of spending money. Although I believe that there is no purer Department in the country than the Post Office, yet the practical effect of our method of administering Ireland by influences known to be English, and not Irish, leads to a vast amount of unnecessary expenditure.

The total receipts of the Irish Exchequer are thus shown to amount to £8,350,000; and against that I have to place an Imperial contribution, which I may call permanent, because it will last for a great number of years, of £3,242,000. I put down £1,000,000 for the Constabulary, because that would be a first charge, although I hope that it will soon come under very effective reduction. I put down £2,510,000 for the other Civil charges in Ireland; and there, again, I have not the smallest doubt that that charge will likewise be very effectually reduced by an Irish Government. Finally, the collection of Revenue is £834,000, making a total charge thus far of £7,586,000. Then we have thought it essential to include in this arrangement, not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of Ireland also, a payment on account of the Sinking Fund against the Irish portion of the National Debt. The Sinking Fund is now paid for the whole National Debt. We have now got to allot a certain portion of that Debt to Ireland. We think it necessary to maintain that Sinking Fund, and especially for the interest of Ireland. When Ireland gets the management of her own affairs, I venture to prophesy that she will want, for useful purposes, to borrow money. But the difficulty of that operation will be enormously higher or lower, according to the condition of her public credit. Her public credit is not yet born. It has yet to lie, like an infant, in the cradle, and it may require a good deal of nursing; but no nursing would be effectual, unless it were plain and palpable to the eye of the whole world that Ireland had provision in actual working order for discharging her old obligations, so as to make it safe for her to contract new obligations more nearly allied to her own immediate wants. I, therefore, put down £750,000 for Sinking Fund. That makes the total charge £7,946,000, against a total income of £8,350,000, or a surplus of £404,000. But I can state to the House that that £404,000 is a part only of the Fund which, under the present state of things, it would be the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the three countries to present to you for the discharge of our collective expenditure.

Sir, the House has heard me with astonishing patience while I have endeavoured to perform what I knew must prove an almost interminable task. There is only one subject more on which I feel it still necessary to detain the House. It is commonly said in England and Scotland —and in the main it is, I think, truly said—that we have for a great number of years been struggling to pass good laws for Ireland. We have sacrificed our time; we have neglected our own business; we have advanced our money —which I do not think at all a great favour conferred on her—and all this in the endeavour to give Ireland good laws. That is quite true in regard to the general course of legislation since 1829. But many of those laws have been passed under influences which can hardly be described otherwise than as influences of fear. Some of our laws have been passed in a spirit of grudging and of jealousy. It is most painful for me to consider that, after four or five years of Parliamentary battle, when a Municipal Corporation Act was passed for Ireland, it was a very different measure to that which, in England and Scotland, created complete and absolute municipal life. Were I to come to the history of the Land Question I could tell a still sadder tale. Let no man assume that he fully knows that history until he has followed it from year to year, beginning with the Devon Commission, or with the efforts of Mr. Sharman Crawford. The appointment of the Devon Commission does, in my opinion, the highest honour to the memory of Sir Robert Peel. Then, notice the mode in which the whole labours of that Commission were frustrated by the domination of selfish interests in the British Parliament. Our first effort at land legislation was delayed until so late a period as the year 1870. I take this opportunity of remarking that sound views on the Land Question were not always confined to Irish Members, nor to the Liberal side of this House. The late Mr. Napier, who became Lord Chancellor of Ireland, when he sat in this House for the academical constituency of Dublin, developed, with great earnestness, truly liberal views on the subject of Irish land, and made generous efforts in that direction—efforts which were, however, intercepted.

But, Sir, I do not deny the general good intentions of Parliament on a variety of great and conspicuous occasions, and its desire to pass good laws for Ireland. But let me say that, in order to work out the purposes of government, there is something more in this world occasionally required than even the passing of good laws. It is sometimes requisite not only that good laws should be passed, but also that they should be passed by the proper persons. The passing of many good laws is not enough in cases where the strong permanent instincts of the people, their distinctive marks of character, the situation and history of the country require not only that these laws should be good, but that they should proceed from a congenial and native source, and besides being good laws should be their own laws. In former times it might have been doubted—I have myself doubted—whether this instinct had been thus developed in Ireland. If such doubts could be entertained before the last General Election they can be entertained no longer.

The principle that I am laying down I am not laying down exceptionally for Ireland. It is the very principle upon which, within my recollection, to the immense advantage of the country, we have not only altered, but revolutionized our method of governing the Colonies. I had the honour to hold Office in the Colonial Department—perhaps I ought to be ashamed to confess it—51 years ago. At that time the Colonies were governed from Downing Street. It is true that some of them had Legislative Assemblies; but with these we were always in conflict. We were always fed with information by what was termed the British Party in those Colonies. A clique of gentlemen constituted themselves the British Party; and the non-British Party, which was sometimes called the "Disloyal Party," was composed of the enormous majority of the population. We had continual shocks, continual debates, and continual conflicts. All that has changed. England tried to pass good laws for the Colonies at that period; but the Colonies said—"We do not want your good laws; we want our own." We admitted the reasonableness of that principle, and it is now coming home to us from across the seas. We have to consider whether it is applicable to the case of Ireland. Do not let us disguise this from ourselves. We stand face to face with what is termed Irish nationality. Irish nationality vents itself in the demand for local autonomy, or separate and complete self-government in Irish, not in Imperial, affairs. Is this an evil in itself? Is it a thing that we should view with horror or apprehension? Is it a thing which we ought to reject or accept only with a wry face, or ought we to wait until some painful and sad necessity is incumbent upon the country, like the necessity of 1780 or the necessity of 1793? Sir, I hold that it is not. There is a saying of Mr. Grattan—who was, indeed, a fiery and a fervid orator; but he was more than that; he was a statesman; his aphorisms are, in my opinion, weighty, and even profound, and I commend them to the careful reflection and examination of the country—when he was deprecating the surrender of the Irish Parliament, and pointing out that its existence did not prevent the perfect union of the two countries, he remarked—"The Channel forbids union; the ocean forbids separation." Is that Channel nothing? Do what you will with your steamers and your telegraphs, can you make that Channel cease to exist, or to be as if it were not? These 60 miles may appear a little thing; but I ask you what are the 20 miles between England and France? These few miles of water have exercised a vital influence upon the whole history, the whole development, and the whole national character of our people.

These, Sir, are great facts. I hold that there is such a thing as local patriotism, which, in itself, is not bad, but good. The Welshman is full of local patriotism — the Scotchman is full of local patriotism; the Scotch nationality is as strong as it ever was, and should the occasion arise—which I believe it never can—it will be as ready to assert itself as in the days of Bannockburn. I do not believe that that local patriotism is an evil. I believe it is stronger in Ireland even than in Scotland. Englishmen are eminently English; Scotchmen are profoundly Scotch; and, if I read Irish history aright, misfortune and calamity have wedded her sons to her soil. The Irishman is more profoundly Irish; but it does not follow that, because his local patriotism is keen, he is incapable of Imperial patriotism. There are two modes of presenting the subject. The one is to present what we now recommend as good, and the other to recommend it as a choice of evils. Well, Sir, I have argued the matter as if it were a choice of evils; I have recognized, as facts entitled to attention, the jealousies which I do not share or feel; and I have argued it on that ground as the only ground on which it can be argued, not only in a mixed auditory, but in the public mind and to the country, which cannot give a minute investigation to the operations of that complicated question. But, in my own heart, I cherish the hope that this is not merely the choice of the lesser evil, but may prove to be rather a good in itself. What is the answer to this? It is only to be found in the view which rests upon the basis of despair and of absolute condemnation of Ireland and Irishmen as exceptions to the beneficent provisions which enable men in general, and Europeans in particular, and Americans, to be capable of performing civil duties, and which considers an Irishman either as a *lusus naturæ* or one for whom justice, common sense, moderation, and national prosperity have no meaning, and who can only understand and appreciate perpetual strife and dissension. Well, Sir, I am not going to argue that view, which, to my mind, is founded on a monstrous misconception. I say that the Irishman is as capable of loyalty as another man—I say that if his loyalty has been checked in its development, why is it? Because the laws by which he is governed do not present themselves to him, as they do to us in England and Scotland, with a native and congenial aspect; and I think I can refer to two illustrations which go strongly to support the doctrine I have advanced. Take the case of the Irish soldier and of the Irish Constabulary. Have you a braver or a more loyal man in your Army than the Irishman, who has shared every danger with his Scotch and English comrades, and who has never been behind them, when confronted by peril, for the sake of the honour and safety of his Empire? Compare this case with that of an ordinary Irishman in Ireland. The Irish soldier has voluntarily placed himself under military law, which is to him a self-chosen law, and he is exempted from that difficulty which works upon the population in Ireland—namely, that they are governed by a law which they do not feel has sprung from the soil. Consider how common it is to hear the observation, in discussing the circumstances of Ireland, that while the Constabulary are largely taken from the Roman Catholic population and from the very class most open to disaffection, where disaffection exists, they form a splendid model of obedience, discipline, and devotion such as the world can hardly match. How is this? It is because they have undertaken a voluntary service which takes them completely out of the category of the ordinary Irishman. They are placed under an authority which is to them congenial because freely accepted. Their loyalty is not checked by the causes that operate on the agricultural population of Ireland. It has grown as freely in the Constabulary and in the Army as if every man in the Constabulary and evey Irish soldier had been an Englishman or a Scotchman.

However this may be, we are sensible that we have taken an important decision — our choice has been made. It has not been made without thought; it has been made in the full knowledge that trial and difficulty may confront us on our path. We have no right to say that Ireland, through her constitutionally-chosen Representatives, will accept the plan I offer. Whether it will be so I do not know—I have no title to assume it; but if Ireland does not cheerfully accept it, it is impossible for us to attempt to force upon her what is intended to be a boon; nor can we possibly press England and Scotland to accord to Ireland what she does not heartily welcome and embrace. There are difficulties; but I rely upon the patriotism and sagacity of this House; I rely on the effects of free and full discussion; and I rely more than all upon the just and generous sentiments of the two British nations. Looking forward, I ask the House to assist us in the work which we have undertaken, and to believe that no trivial motive can have driven us to it—to assist us in this work which, we believe, will restore Parliament to its dignity and legislation to its free and unimpeded course. I ask you to stay that waste of public treasure which is involved in the present system of government and legislation in Ireland, and which is not a waste only, but which demoralizes while it exhausts. I ask you to show to Europe and to America that we, too, can face political problems which America 20 years ago faced, and which many countries in Europe have been called upon to face, and have not feared to deal with. I ask that in our own case we should practise, with firm and fearless hand, what we have so often preached — the doctrine which we have so often inculcated upon others—namely, that the concession of local self-government is not the way to sap or impair, but the way to strengthen and consolidate unity. I ask that we should learn to rely less upon merely written stipulations, and more upon those better stipulations which are written on the heart and mind of man. I ask that we should apply to Ireland that happy experience which we have gained in England and in Scotland, where the course of generations has now taught us, not as a dream or a theory, but as practice and as life, that the best and surest foundation we can find to build upon is the foundation afforded by the affections, the convictions, and the will of the nation; and it is thus, by the decree of the Almighty, that we may be enabled to secure at once the social peace, the fame, the power, and the permanence of the Empire.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the provision for the future Government of Ireland."—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

Colonel WARING (Down, N.) said, he knew that he had need to appeal to the consideration of the House on rising to address it after the marvellous performance and extraordinary piece of eloquence which they had just heard from the right hon. Gentleman opposite. It had, however, fallen to his (Colonel Waring's) lot to make an attempt to follow him, and he would perform his duty to the best of his ability; and in doing so he would endeavour to avoid treating the subject controversially, though he would admit that it was very difficult for him to do so. No science, he supposed, had advanced so much in recent years as chemistry; but in all his progress and all the perfection of his appliances the chemist, so far, had utterly failed to transmute the baser metal into gold; and, equally so, to his (Colonel Waring's) mind, the political chemistry of the Prime Minister had failed as completely as scientific chemistry. The right hon. Gentleman's speech was in itself a wonderful and unparalleled piece of oratory; but when the glamour and the eloquence of the oratory had passed away it would be found that the measure itself was not one which would be accepted by the House or by the country. The fact was that, though the measure was prepared, sent out, and put into form by the right hon. Gentleman, the material came from another workshop. There it acquired an odour and flavour which all the spices of the East could not remove—an odour left by hands steeped in treason. The House, however, was not taken by surprise at the conduct of the right hon. Gentleman, because, in his speech at Edinburgh on the 9th of November last, he had given the country fair warning when he said that if the Liberals were returned to Parliament in a minority which could only become a majority by the Irish vote, it would not be safe to enter upon the consideration of a measure in respect of which it would be in the power of the Irish Party to say—"Unless you do this and unless you do that we will turn you out to-morrow." It appeared, however, to him (Colonel Waring) that though the right hon. Gentleman had proved to the House that he had himself been unable to resist the temptation which he had foreshadowed, it remained to be seen whether or not the whole Liberal Party would yield to the same temptation. There was one fallacy which pervaded the right hon. Gentleman's speech throughout which he (Colonel Waring) must at once point out—that was that it was possible to have a united Ireland, and that the present majority of the Representatives of Ireland was, in any true proportion, a representation of the people of Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman alluded to the old Irish Parliaments. He said that for many centuries Ireland had had a separate Parliament of her own, and contended that the present proposal was, therefore, no innovation. But it was well known that the experiment of a free and independent Parliament was not tried prior to the year 1782. In that year Poyning's Act was repealed, with the result that where force had been previously used corruption was resorted to. Before the year 1782 there was a Parliament of iron, which gave place to a Parliament of gold; and now Ireland was offered a Parliament of paper, bound by obligations which it would observe precisely as long as it thought fit. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to derive great satisfaction at the manner in which the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) had modified his demands in that House. But he (Colonel Waring) thought that, if a little care was taken to see how far the statements of the hon. Member for the City of Cork in that House tallied with his statement outside, it would be found that the congratulations of the right hon. Gentleman were scarcely founded on a satisfactory basis. That hon. Gentleman, in a recent speech, said that his object was to make Ireland a nation free from outside control, with a right to direct her course as she might choose amongst the other nations of the world. Did the right hon. Gentleman believe there was any finality at all to the scheme he now proposed, or that it would be accepted by hon. Members below the Gangway in any other sense than as a fulcrum for extorting further concessions? They were told that this proposition was brought forward as an alternative for coercion. That word "coercion" was, certainly, a most unfortunate word for those who believed it was only a name and not a reality; and he hoped that if the English Parliament continued to rule Ireland when exceptional measures were necessary they would be extended to England and Scotland. It would then be found how little such measures were to be feared by law-abiding persons; for he never heard yet of an honest man who had ever suffered from them, or who, if he were asked to obey the provisions of these Acts, did not feel that he was, at the same time, morally bound to do so. Then they were told that Grattan's Parliament was the model of everything that it ought to be, except, unfortunately, that it was impossible to recall it from the past. But that system was one which no one would think of reconstructing, and any substitute for it now would be anything but Grattan's Parliament, which was Protestant and loyal. After all, what was the effect of Grattan's Parliament during the 16 years that it ruled Ireland? Perhaps it might be going a little too far to frame an argument from the *post hoc* to the *propter hoc;* but they knew that the rule of that Parliament resulted in the Rebellion of 1798, out of which sprang the Act of Union. The Prime Minister, in the earlier part of his speech, spoke about guarantees. The Loyalists in Ireland, however, were not going to place very much faith in paper guarantees, and did not care if they never heard of them again. Yet in the course of a very exhaustive speech the right hon. Gentleman never said what they were to be. It was true that, at a later stage of the Bill, they would hear what the guarantees would be; but he (Colonel Waring) confessed that, if the lives and property of the minority were supposed to be made safe by those little pieces of parchment, he had great curiosity to know how it could be done. It was said that, after all, there remained the golden link of the Crown. He would be very sorry to throw any doubt on the value of that link; but he could not help thinking that its strength had undergone a considerable amount of discredit among those who would be asked to believe in its security. He held that the Parliament of this country was going beyond its right and legitimate powers when it proposed to transfer from itself to any other Body, however constituted, the allegiance of those people in Ireland who disagreed with that transfer. When it was decided to alter the position of the Honourable East India Company, and to transfer its rule in India to the Crown, the European soldiers of that Company were given their option either to enlist in Her Majesty's Service or not, and were offered a passage home in case of refusal. They were also offered a bounty if they remained. Some of the Irish Loyalists—that was to say, the landed proprietors—had been offered a bounty. It was within their right to decline that bounty, and they did decline it, and they refused to transfer their allegiance from Her Gracious Majesty and the Parliament of this country to any other Body whatever. He declared that, if it became necessary, they would take such steps as might be advisable to secure their connection with this country, and to resist any attempt to transfer their allegiance to any other Power or Parliament. The Prime Minister said he did not propose that taxation should not have representation; yet his proposed scheme for Ireland looked uncommonly like it. They were now part and parcel of one of the greatest Empires of the world that the sun ever shone upon, and were utterly determined that they would not be changed into Colonials, and made a Dependency, not only not self-governing, but a Dependency which would be at the mercy of those from whom they differed politically. There was not a single argument used by the Prime Minister, in favour of his proposal, that would not apply with equal force to the North-Eastern part of Ireland. If that portion of Ireland were represented in an Irish Legislature, he (Colonel Waring) did not doubt it would not be long before a Home Rule movement for it would be instituted in that Assembly. It appeared to him that there were three courses open to the right hon. Gentleman, one of which would have been to rule Ireland with a just and equal hand in the same manner as he would rule England and Scotland. Another course, not quite so good, but which, perhaps, might still be justified as not altogether dishonourable, was to say—"This grand old Empire is getting into the sere and yellow leaf. We do not feel ourselves competent to rule such an extent of territory, and we will do as the Emperor Honorius did in the 4th century—we will withdraw our legions from Ireland and allow it to rule itself." That would be an intelligible course to take, and an honest one; for by taking it an opportunity would arise for the minority to do what the right hon. Gentleman said he had no doubt they would be able to do—to take care of themselves. The minority certainly had not the slightest doubt in the world of being able to take care of themselves. But the course foreshadowed in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman—the third course—was one which could not be adopted without dishonour to England and the nation at large, and that was to turn over those who had been England's faithful garrison in Ireland, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of their bitterest enemies. It was true, they had not always done what they ought to have done; but, whatever their faults in the past to others, they had been always faithful to England, indeed, probably too much so, and any dangers confronting them had arisen from their loyalty to this country and to the Empire, of which he hoped they might still continue an integral part. He thanked the House for the attention with which it had heard him. He would not have risen to address it only that he felt bound to speak the feelings of what he might not be allowed to call the loyal minority, as they were forbidden to assume that title to themselves, but which he would call, for want of a better name, the West Britons of Ireland.

Mr. MACNAGHTEN (Antrim, N.) said, that as an Irishman deeply attached to Ireland, and deeply interested in its welfare, he should be very much wanting in his duty to his constituents if he did not state the grounds on which he objected to the measure which had been proposed. Much as he admired the Orange Body, and great as were the services which they had rendered, he was not one of their number, nor had he any intention of becoming so. He belonged to that class of men to whom the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) alluded not very long ago when he said that there were in Ulster a number of quiet folk who were content to leave the care of peace and order in the hands of the Executive Government of the day. Whether those quiet folk would be content to leave the care of peace and order to the Executive Government that would be created if this Bill passed he did not know, and very much doubted. But it was on behalf of those quiet folk that he wished to address the House. Upon this subject there was no difference of opinion whatever among loyal subjects in Ireland; none among Conservatives; and he would go further, and say he was happy to think there was none among Liberals either. It was not with the Loyalists of Ulster a question of Party; the interests at stake were far too serious for that; and he was quite sure that no hon. Member who sat on either side of the House would knowingly prefer the interests of Party to the interests of the nation. He did not think, therefore, it would be treated as a Party question in that House. Although the Liberals in Ireland did not succeed in returning any Member to Parliament at the General Election, they were still a numerous Body, and a Body of great weight and influence in Ireland, and at a recent Conference they declared their determined opposition to Home Rule. Indeed, when it was first suggested that the right hon. Gentleman intended to introduce a measure to repeal the Union, such as he had unfolded to-night, the Liberals in Ireland absolutely refused to believe it. They said it was an invention of the Tory Party, and that it was impossible that a man whom all admired would commit an act which the right hon. Gentleman himself had said could only be done for the purpose of making this country ridiculous in the eyes of mankind. But when the truth forced itself upon them they held a very large meeting in Belfast, at which all the Leaders of the Liberal Party in Ireland were present, and passed this resolution—

> "We declare our determined opposition to the establishment of a separate Irish Parliament, as certain to result in disastrous collision between sections of the people holding conflicting views on social, economic, and religious subjects, and as likely to create a feeling of insecurity that would jeopardize all industrial and commercial pursuits. We are satisfied that the maintenance of the Union with Great Britain is the best safeguard for the peace and prosperity of all classes in Ireland."

They had heard a speech that night of unexampled power and marvellous eloquence, to which the House had listened with rapt attention. The right hon. Gentleman said in it that he did not propose the Repeal of the Union; but if it was not that, what was it? It was Repeal of the Union more complete than O'Connell himself had ever dreamt of. ["No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen said "No." Well, then, what was it, if it was not Repeal of the Union? What was there left out? If it was not degrading Ireland into the position of a Colony, what was it? Ireland would no longer be an integral portion of the Empire, but would be treated exactly as a Colony. It was not to interfere with Customs; it was to have nothing to do with the Army; it was not to discuss Foreign or Colonial relations. There was no voice that it could have in the affairs of England, and it could not have a voice in the affairs of the Empire as a whole. Therefore, those Irishmen who consented to accept the position of a Member of that Parliament would accept a position very different from that which Members held in this House of Commons, where they held a far higher position than they would in their own country. But the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman was not received with unanimous applause by those who called themselves the Nationalist Members; and he should be very curious to know what course, on reflection, they would take. What would they do when sitting in an Irish Parliament? What could they do there that they could not do here? They had here the most complete control of Irish legislation. Here they could turn out Ministries; and there he did not know who would be Prime Minister. He supposed the Gentleman in whose hands they had placed their votes would be perpetual Prime Minister or President of the Assembly. To allow a separate Legislature in Ireland would degrade them to the position of a mere Colony. [An hon. MEMBER: No degradation.] Well, what, he would ask, was to become of the Loyalists of Ulster? They were somebody, and though a minority, yet a loyal minority. Apparently, the Prime Minister had not quite made up his mind. In one part of his speech he seemed to suggest that Ulster might remain an integral part of the Empire; and in another part of his speech he appeared to favour the notion that she might become a smaller Colony than the rest of Ireland on her own account. The people of Ulster would not be satisfied with that. If they had to choose, they would choose to remain part of the Empire, and that their Members should continue to sit in that House. He did not believe they would be content to leave their business and the control of their taxation to such a Parliament as it was proposed to create. To do so, he believed, would be fatal to the liberty, the education, and the religion of the people of the North of Ireland. Neither the House nor the right hon. Gentleman had the smallest notion how deep and unanimous was the feeling of the people in the North of Ireland as regarded this subject. There they were all determined, so far as they could, to hold their present position, and not to exchange it for one so vastly inferior. They also opposed the measure because they thought it would be disastrous to England. It seemed to him that some Members were greatly relieved at the prospect of getting rid of the Irish Members. He was not sure at all what view the Irish Members took on this matter; but he was extremely doubtful whether they would accept the provision which the Prime Minister had offered. They were all extremely anxious to hear what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) had to say. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken very clearly and very fairly upon the subject, and had publicly told them, some time ago, that nothing except the Queen's Government stood between Ireland and civil war, and that the separation of the two countries would be followed by scenes which would take them back centuries in the march of civilization. He (Mr. Macnaghten) did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was of that opinion now; but, whether he was or not, the situation at the time that he made that speech remained unchanged, and he (Mr. Macnaghten) held the right hon. Gentleman to what he had said. Did he still think that that opinion was settled in the minds of every reasonable Englishman?

MR. O'NEILL (Antrim, Mid) said, that the Party to which he belonged had been returned to that House with one distinct order from their constituents, which was to oppose as much as they could, and to resist to the utmost of their power, anything like an approach to a violation of the Act of Union ending in a separation of England and Ireland. For a number of years past what had been called remedial legislation had been passed by that House, and hon. Members had flattered themselves, from time to time, that they had passed measures which would be final, and of a character to gain the affections of the Irish people. But not a single measure that had been passed had gone one step towards attaining that object. The fact was that there existed among the great mass of the Irish people an innate hatred of England. ["No, no!"] It was hopeless to suppose that a measure, even of a sweeping character such as that suggested by the Prime Minister, were passed in its integrity, the people of Ireland could stand still under the circumstances, for it would be regarded by certain classes in Ireland as nothing more than an instalment towards an end, which meant the Repeal of the Union. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) gave them, last year, a very strong idea as to what his views were. He did not state that he wished for complete separation; but he did say that he thought there were better men to come after him, who would not be satisfied with the extent to which he had gone, and would do their utmost to bring about legislative separation between the two countries. He (Mr. O'Neill) did not defend the manner in which England had treated Ireland in years gone by; he might, however, say that the Loyalist minority were now perfectly satisfied with the way in which England dealt with Irish affairs, and they feared that if any change were made in the Government of Ireland, such as that proposed, they would come very badly out of it. Therefore, if there was any alteration made in the Government of Ireland with regard to separating Ulster—the Loyalists of Ulster—from the Mother Kingdom, he could assure the House that such alteration would be most strongly resented. The measure which had been proposed by the Prime Minister was not at all satisfactory, for even the right hon. Gentleman could not pledge himself to the integrity of an Irish Parliament, such as he now proposed. The reason why he (Mr. O'Neill) made that observation was plain. The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister) could not trust an Irish Parliament, such as he proposed to institute; because he had felt it necessary to place a certain check upon what such a Parliament could do. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the loyal minority must be protected, thereby acknowledging that they required protection from the Parliament which he now proposed to give to Ireland. He (Mr. O'Neill) supposed that that protection was to come from England. What he wished to impress upon the House was that, by its adopting such a measure of Home Rule as this, they would be alienating the loyal Ulster people. He did not want any restrictions placed upon the people of Ulster, for it would then be found that the Protestants of that Province would be perfectly able to protect themselves, in case of any interference with what they considered their just rights. From his knowledge of the temper and the feeling of the Protestants of the North of Ireland, he could say that they were quite determined to protect themselves by all means in their power if by any chance their liberty was interfered with. People in Ireland, even hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, could not help feeling proud of occupying the position of an integral portion of the United Kingdom. From what had been heard that night, however, it appeared they were to be deprived of that position in the future; but how Ireland was to continue to exist on its own basis he could not see. One objection to Home Rule, as carried out in the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman, had been urged before he (Mr. O'Neill) was quite aware; but he ventured to urge it again, and that was that an Irish Government would have no credit at all. They would not be able to borrow money; for he did not think that a prudent person, with a proper idea of financial security, would be foolish enough to lend money to financially independent Ireland. A loan of the kind would be on such a condition of interest that it would be ruinous to a Government to accept it. So, then, the result would be that none of the great works now carried on with the assistance of the British Treasury would be continued hereafter. Railways would not be constructed; for there was not the capital in Ireland for the purpose. Those who had capital would not spend it. The same might be said of harbours, roads, and other public works. In that way Ireland would suffer in a terrible manner from the carrying out of such a proposition as had been foreshadowed by the Prime Minister. He would not detain the House with an attempt, on that occasion, to reply to the long speech of the Prime Minister; but, as he said before, if they were to have Home Rule, let it be thorough, and the Protestants would be quite prepared to take care of themselves. All the restrictions which had been indicated by the right hon. Gentleman would be looked upon as grievances, and would be resisted, not only by the bulk of agitators, as what were called grievances were now resisted, but resisted with all the weight, authority, and importance of this new Parliament to be constituted in Ireland. In the end, the English people would be brought to feel they had no right to resist opinion expressed in such a manner by a constituted Representative authority. There would be no speciality; grievance after grievance would be agitated, until total separation resulted, and the result would be the establishment of an Irish Republic, which would be the focus of foreign intrigue in time of peace, and would be a source of imminent danger in England in time of war.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.) said, he thought it was time that some hon. Member representing an English constituency should rise to support the opinions of the minority in Ireland, and not leave the Irish Loyalist Members to fight the battle unaided. He could not help feeling there had been an air of unreality about the whole of the night's proceedings. To understand the position of affairs it was necessary to recall the incidents of the last few months, and especially the speeches delivered by the Prime Minister in Mid Lothian. Nothing that was then said was sufficiently precise to induce the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) to give his support to the right hon. Gentleman; and if it had been known that the right hon. Gentleman was going to propose a Home Rule scheme, it was doubtful whether even he would have been elected for that constituency, and he was quite sure, if he had been, he would not have had a large following. It was certain that fewer Members would have been returned to support him, and there would have been in Parliament a good many more supporters of the Union. There was at first nothing like revelation; but since then there had been a good many inspired newspaper letters and interviews; but they were always being warned that they were not authorized. When the present Government was formed, it was significant that there were a great many remarkable abstentions from the Government, and also some very remarkable inclusions. The Liberal statesmen to whom they might have looked with confidence to oppose any attack on the integrity of the Empire were not in the Government; but an eminent literary man who had advocated Home Rule was in it. Since then, as they all knew, two eminent Members of the Government had resigned. That was the way in which the country had been kept in suspense, and more painful suspense he had never known. He was glad the suspense was at an end, and that they were now in possession of the truth—he could not say the unvarnished truth, because the weak parts of the scheme had been glossed over. The ground, or rather the extraordinary excuse on which the Prime Minister justified his change of policy, was that after the late Government declined to renew the Crimes Act repressive legislation was at an end. The right hon. Gentleman said it would have been easy to pass a renewal of that Act, but the general opinion was that it would have been very difficult; and it was doubtful whether the right hon. Gentleman himself would have given any assistance to get it passed. But why should the omission have rendered the renewal more difficult than it was after the right hon. Gentleman refused to renew it in 1880, when the consequence was that crime increased so much in the two following years that it was necessary to ask for greater powers than would otherwise have been necessary? It was an entire assumption to say there was now no course midway between exceptional coercion and the separation proposed. The right hon. Gentleman said there was much less crime in Ireland now than there was in 1832; but, instead of that being a reason for granting Home Rule, it was a proof of the good that had been effected by the beneficent government of Ireland under the direction of the Imperial Parliament. It showed that education had done much for the people; that law and order, on the whole, had been maintained; and that justice had been administered, if with lessening severity, at least with increasing efficiency. During the last 20 years the advances made to the farmers and the savings they had invested had increased out of all proportion to the wealth of the landowning classes, which was diminishing. The improvements in communication and other evidences of material progress showed that British rule had not been altogether unsuccessful. The right hon. Gentleman said that the scheme did not impair the Imperial Union, and he contrasted it with proposals for a central Administrative Board. But in what did his scheme differ from the others, if it did not involve separation? Could there be a wider separation than that the Representatives of Ireland in this and in the other House of Parliament should be removed to a Legislature sitting at Dublin, with full powers to legislate, except upon Imperial affairs? What did legislation mean? Did it not mean the power of passing laws affecting the liberty, the prosperity, and the welfare of the subjects of the Queen under whom they lived. Did it not mean that everyone who lived on the other side of the Irish Channel should be withdrawn from the care of the Imperial Parliament and placed under the control of the Irish Parliament? It was a question, however, whether the Irish people would be satisfied with the domestic Legislature promised to be given them. He (Sir James Fergusson) was inclined to think that they would feel themselves placed in a position of inferiority in consequence of the many things which were withdrawn from their supervision. There were two points which seemed to him to constitute a weakness in the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. The first was the lack of provisions for the necessary protection of the minority. The right hon. Gentleman said that there were several schemes which had been discussed for the protection of the minority in Ireland, and he could not say which of them would be most effective in the attainment of its object. For his part, he (Sir James Fergusson) should say that it should be one of the first elements in the consideration of any scheme to be submitted to Parliament, and more especially in a scheme like the one under notice, that the minority in Ireland, whether in religion or class, should be entirely protected against any unjust legislation. He felt certain that this Parliament would never allow the minority to remain unprotected without the fullest conditions being made in their interests. Yet that was a point of the scheme which the right hon. Gentleman passed over in the lightest manner. He (Sir James Fergusson) thought that circumstance showed that it was impossible to frame any scheme by which the minority would be adequately protected, otherwise they might feel sure that the right hon. Gentleman would have stated it to the House that evening. Another point which struck him as being a lamentably weak one in the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman was that in which he spoke of putting Ireland in the position of a self-governing Colony. He (Sir James Fergusson) would remind the House, however, that in a self-governing Colony there were no Imperial troops, unless they were desired by and paid for on the part of the particular Colony. He certainly did not hear the right hon. Gentleman say that a large garrison would not still be required in Ireland. If it should be, he did not understand that that garrison was to be paid for by Ireland, or that it was to be at the option of Ireland whether she retained that garrison or not. However that might be, he did not think the House would be ready to place Ireland in the anomalous position of being free to say whether or not she desired the Queen's troops to be kept in Ireland. The Prime Minister said that Irish laws had been passed under the influence of fear.

He (Sir James Fergusson) did not understand whether, in that reference, the right hon. Gentleman meant the laws which came under the name of coercive laws. He (Sir James Fergusson) did not think, however, that these particular laws were passed under the influence of fear. He thought rather that they were passed under the influence of a sense of duty, for the protection of the Queen's subjects in Ireland and for the maintenance of law and order. Surely it was well known that laws had been passed in this country for the repression of special crimes—such, for example, as the large number of robberies by violence in the streets of London by midnight robbers. Laws were passed to inflict the punishment of flogging, and those laws were effective in putting down the particular crime of garotte robbery. It would be a strong thing to say, however, that those laws were passed under the influence of fear. Again, when agrarian crimes became common in Ireland, when persons were shot down at their own thresholds, and in the presence of their families, and when cattle were shockingly mutilated, he did not think that the special laws which were passed, designed to enforce obedience to the law, were passed under the influence of fear. It would be quite as justifiable to say that this Bill was introduced under the influence of fear. At all events, he believed that, in our generation, Parliament had been actuated by an earnest sense of justice, and they desired to repair the mistakes of the past—a desire which had even gone beyond the laws of political economy, in order to give prosperity and peace to that country. The right hon. Gentleman made use of a curious illustration, taken from one of the speeches of Mr. Grattan. He (Sir James Fergusson) maintained, however, that the existence of the Irish Channel was not a fact which essentially prevented harmony between the two countries. The real cause of disunion was to be found in the existence of a number of selfish agitators, many of whom were foreign to the country, who lived by sowing dissension between the two nations; that was the reason why England and Ireland were not more united. It was not the English Channel, but the separate national organization, which divided the English from the French; and they would not now be lamenting the differences between England and Ireland were it not for the agitators who made profit by exciting the passions of the Irish people. He thought it must have been with a sense of degradation that the House of Commons found that evening their oldest statesman false to the traditions of his life. They must have felt pain at seeing him separated from many of his old Colleagues in order to propose a scheme at which the statesmen under whom the right hon. Gentleman rose to eminence would have marvelled — a scheme which entirely undid that work which England had been doing for so many generations. About such a man as the right hon. Gentleman one could not say that a vulgar love of power had driven him to such a declaration as they had listened to; but one could only wonder that the right hon. Gentleman's mind could have so altered as to induce him to falsify every statement he had made about Ireland up to the present time. The power of the right hon. Gentleman over the House, the interest which he threw around every subject, were truly astonishing; yet he (Sir James Fergusson) felt it would take more than his power and his ability to induce the House of Commons to consent to such a scheme as that which he had propounded that evening. But they had something else to do than to admire the right hon. Gentleman. They had to be true to the principles which had been handed down to them by their forefathers, which were their inheritance now, and which called upon them to discharge solemn duties from which he trusted they would not shrink.

Mr. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster) said, he would remind the House that they were not discussing the proposals of the Prime Minister on the second reading of the Bill. The discussion of the merits of the Bill were to some extent premature; and there were many Liberal Members who, having heard the provisions of the Bill explained by the Prime Minister that evening for the first time, would like a little time to consider it before making up their mind with respect to it. He should certainly, for his own part, like an opportunity for consideration before finally deciding whether he should vote for or against it on the second reading.

It had been said that the constituencies had not yet had time to form an opinion on the subject; but he could answer with perfect safety as to the views of his constituency in the West Riding of Yorkshire on the subject. The people there had made up their minds that they ought to give to the Irish people the fullest measure of self-government which was consistent with the unity and integrity of the Empire. The only question which arose for doubt was whether this particular measure was consistent with the unity and integrity of the Empire? Well, on that point he might remark that if hon. Members would study the record of Parliamentary debates in any year—when the Irish Parliament did exist—say in the year 1795—they would find that the unity and integrity of the Empire were assumed. In all those great debates, in which Pitt and Fox took part, no one ever expressed a doubt that the unity and the integrity of the Empire existed, notwithstanding the fact that Ireland had then a separate Parliament. The Prime Minister therefore had argued—and he (Mr. Shirley) trusted that it would be found to be the case—that the existence of a separate Parliament for Ireland was not inconsistent with the unity and integrity of the Empire which he (Mr. Shirley) desired to maintain. The hon. Member for Mid Antrim (Mr. O'Neill) had stated that, in the event of this measure passing, he and his Friends would resort to civil war. He (Mr. Shirley) left that seditious expression to remain where it was. He believed it was part of the language of brag and bluster which Irish Members who came from that part of Ireland were accustomed so frequently to employ, and by the use of which, perhaps, they did not mean anything in particular. If, however, they really meant what was intended to be implied by such expressions, all he would say was that he trusted the Executive would give attention to those Gentlemen and deal effectively with them.

Mr. LONG (Wilts, Devizes) said, he was rejoiced to find that, at last, a Member of the great Liberal Party had found his tongue, and had given the House his opinion on the subject now in debate. The hon. Member who had just sat down (Mr. Shirley) had told them, though he might not have made up his mind on the measure under discussion, that he, speaking on behalf of his constituents, was ready to see put in execution for Ireland as complete a system of local self-government as was compatible with the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire. It seemed to him (Mr. Long), however, that the hon. Gentleman had arrived suspiciously near the formation of a judgment on the question then under discussion; and if the Loyalists of Ireland and the people of England who hoped to see that measure defeated had no better assistance to look to from the opposite side of the House than that of the hon. Member who had just spoken, then he feared they would have a very small Party indeed to rely on if that was a fair specimen of the general feeling among Liberal Members. No doubt they had had a speech of marvellous ability from the Prime Minister; but it was almost impossible to realize that the right hon. Gentleman was the same person who had previously spoken in such very different language, both in and out of that House, from that which he had used that night in reference to the men whom he described as the Representatives of the opinion of Ireland. When he observed that evening the aspect of right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the same Bench with the Prime Minister, he could not help thinking that, delightful as place and power might be, he (Mr. Long) would not, humble individual though he was, exchange positions with any of those right hon. Gentlemen, considering the feelings which they must have entertained. Hon. Members from the North of Ireland might be accused of talking brag and bluster; but he thought that the great majority of English Members and of Englishmen also would be inclined to use as strong, if not much stronger, language if they had been subjected to the same trials and troubles as the Ulstermen had experienced of late. The people of England had very little conception of the present state of things in Ireland. He had listened to the speech of the Prime Minister with amazement and sorrow, because he thought it would be a great misfortune to the country that a career so great and so brilliant as that of the right hon. Gentleman should, almost at its termination, culminate in asking for leave for the introduction of a measure of that character. It was all very well to say that there would be guarantees for the protection of the minority, and that there would be no severance of the union of the Empire; but if hon. Members opposite had varied in their opinions since the General Election, certainly the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Party could not be fairly charged with inconsistency, because they had always held the same views from the beginning to the end, and had never failed to make their plans and purposes perfectly plain to the country. Therefore, whatever safeguards they might place around the maintenance of the Union, and whatever steps they might take to preserve that Union, the Party which had followed so successfully up to the present one particular line of action would follow it to the end; and if the actions and utterances of that Party, both in and out of that House, meant anything at all, it meant, in the end, the severance of the Union between England and Ireland. He had taken the trouble, to the best of his ability, to elicit the opinion of his own constituency on that subject, and the directions which had been given to him by all classes among them, including the agricultural labourers, were simple and plain—namely, that nothing should be done, not merely to sever, but even to weaken the Union. Believing as he, and they as well, did that, if it were to pass through Parliament and become law, that measure must result in the severance between the two countries, he thought they were justified in opposing it to the utmost of their ability. They had on former occasions been carried away by the force of the Prime Minister's eloquence, and had forborne to pronounce any opinion on his proposals until they had seen them in print; but that night the right hon. Gentleman's speech was very different. The right hon. Gentleman had not employed that rhetorical power of which he was so great a master in laying his scheme before them; and if what they had heard that night from "an old Parliamentary hand" and so skilful and advocate was the best case that could be made out for that measure, the right hon. Gentleman's Friends must feel that, after all, it was but a very poor affair. The right hon. Gentleman had talked about the present state of "Boycotting" in Ireland, and had asked—"Is there not intimidation in this country?" Was that worthy of so great an occasion. He did not desire to argue whether there was, or was not, some amount of intimidation in this country; but was there anything to compare with the system of "Boycotting" prevailing in Ireland? He maintained that there was nothing of the kind. Anxious as Members of the Conservative Party were to see the way for legislation clear, the troubles of Ireland set at rest, and the difficulties removed that had hitherto retarded our progress, there was a price which was too high for such benefits, and that was to give up the integrity of the Empire. Because they saw in the Government scheme proposals which would lead to the dismemberment of the Empire, they would do their utmost to prevent the Bill being read a second time. If the Government had been consistent, and adhered to speeches they delivered to their constituents at the late Election, he believed they might have carried out a policy which would have had the support of the Conservative side of the House, and brought just as much peace and prosperity to Ireland, while running no risk whatever of destroying the unity of the Empire.

Mr. TREVELYAN (Hawick, &c.): Mr. Speaker—Sir, I certainly should not have ventured to interpose so early in such a debate as this if it were not that recent circumstances have laid on me an obligation to speak, which I am told by my Colleagues in this House is considered to be imperative. I certainly should never have ventured to criticize from notes hastily taken in the course of an oration which, differing from the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, I must say was so full of matter, so grand in words, and, still more, so remarkable in energy and diction that, judging by own experience, it actually benumbed the faculties of those who heard it. But my task, though difficult, is not impossible, for I rise to explain why I left the Government of my right hon. Friend; and I am told, both in private and by the newspapers, that it would be as well that I should explain why I joined that Government, holding the opinions I did. Now, I should like to express the extreme compunction and regret with which I left the Government.

Hon. Members who have been 20 years with me in the House will remember the staunch and eager, but, I think, not very prominent part I have always taken in every Party conflict, and they may now measure that compunction and regret; but, in spite of that regret, I may say that from first to last, in this business, there is no step I have taken with any doubt or hesitation. When the rumours of Home Rule began first to go abroad, I thought it was my duty, as one of the only two—alas! since the event of last Monday, I am now the only one of the Irish Secretaries who had had experience of Ireland since the new circumstances, which are entirely different from her past—I felt it my duty, at the earliest possible moment, to place before the country what I had thought out about Ireland in the clearest and plainest words. I made a speech in Warwickshire which the Prime Minister tells me he had already read with attention when he asked me to join the Government, and he was good enough to allow me to repeat the principal points of that speech, and to assure him that I still agreed with them. As to what passed on that occasion when I joined the right hon. Gentleman's Government, the right hon. Gentleman allows that my action since that date has been perfectly consistent with political propriety, with loyalty towards my Colleagues, and with my duty to my right hon. Friend. But, apart from loyalty and honour, there is a question of judgment and of wisdom. Was I wise in joining the Cabinet under the circumstances in which it was formed? Now, I will say what I have to say in the plainest words. What did the situation appear to be last January? The Conservative Government had fallen, as it seems to me, for the simple reason that it had not supporters enough in the House to keep it up, and it was necessarily succeeded by a Liberal Government. A Liberal Government was formed which was the same, with very few exceptions, as the one I sat in last June. There were only five new Members of the Cabinet, and of those three had been Members of the same Government as I had previously sat in, and were bound by the policy of that Government. Nothing that the Prime Minister had said or written in public—nothing that he had spoken till three or four hours ago—was inconsistent with the views which I held about Ireland. All his Colleagues—well, almost all—had pronounced themselves against Home Rule. One, and one only, had pronounced himself strongly in favour of it; and that right hon. Gentleman—my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley)—I should never dream of putting myself by the side of, either in ability or literary power. Not only should I not dream of doing so, but no other man in the country would who is under 45. But I still maintain that my convictions are as deeply rooted as his, and I feel myself quite assured of being able to act up to them. Well, Sir, at this crisis other right hon. Friends of mine took another view, and all honour to them. But my view was that if those Liberals who were opposed to Home Rule, and were opposed to handing over law and order in Ireland to those whom we had all of us so often described as the enemies of law and order, were to stay out of the Liberal Cabinet, that would voluntarily and spontaneously be making a confession that the Liberal Party was a Home Rule Party; and that confession—I speak with all respect to those who feel otherwise—is one which, until every faculty I have is strained to the uttermost, and until every Constitutional method and opportunity inside and outside the House had been exhausted, I, for one, will never consent to make. Knowing the opinions which my Colleagues had held, I thought we should knock the measure about in the Cabinet, as Cabinets do, and mould it into accord with what had been our relative opinions, and what are mine now. But I was disappointed in my expectations, and that is why I stand here tonight. I know not whether I chose the better part; but of this I am quite certain—that I chose the most unpleasant one. I did my best according to my lights to prevent one of the great Parties of the State—and that a Party in regard to which, as a Member, I have a small and humble responsibility—from what I cannot but regard as neither for the credit nor for the welfare of the country. Now, I come to the points upon which I thought it necessary to leave the Cabinet, and they are very simple and clear points. In the first place, I should like to read an extract from my speech in Warwickshire, because it will put, as strongly as I can put it, what my opinions are. I said—

> "Now, there is one point which in the coming controversies public men ought to fix quite clearly in their minds, and that is, as far as law and order and the peace of the country are concerned, there is no half-way house between entire separation and Imperial control. In Lord Spencer's time, when the tribunals and the police were in the hands of the Central Government, the peace of the country was preserved, and men were able to go about their business in security. But it was very up-hill work, and it was all the Government could do to hold its own against disorder. Every Minister of the law, from the Judge to the constable, did his duty in the full sense that he was serving masters who wished him to do his duty and would protect him in doing it. But even then it was no very easy matter. There was one district in the West of Ireland where in the course of a very short time there were no less than eight violent murders in the immediate vicinity of a single town; and in 1881-2 if the Constabulary had been at the disposal of a popularly-elected body, instead of a strong Central Government, nothing could have preserved that district from disasters as serious as any recorded in Irish history. Unless we are prepared to give the control of the police to the Central Authority in all its departments, we had better go in at once for the repeal of the Union."

I am not going to trouble the House with long quotations, but it was necessary that I should read this passage; and I will ask the House is this speech consistent with the Prime Minister's plan of preserving law and order which he has detailed to us to-night? In my opinion, it is utterly inconsistent with it. The Resident Magistrates—the backbone of the system of law and order in Ireland — will, if they continue to exist, be officers under the Executive Authority, which Executive Authority will be dependent upon an elected Parliament. The Judges will, with the exception of one Court, principally concerned with fiscal cases, be appointed by the Ministry, and removable by an Address of the two Orders. Now, I have the greatest possible respect for the existing Irish Judges. They have done their duty under circumstances of the very greatest difficulty and trial, and even now it is necessary that I should speak plainly, because I am the only man in this Lower House who has this experience. Such was the tremendous moral pressure upon them—such, in some cases, was the physical danger — such was the terrible vituperation and calumny to which they were subjected, that we used to consider that it was only a very brave Judge who would do his duty under these trying circumstances; and that this feeling was indicated in this country is plain by the respect with which courageous Irish Judges were treated. Now, if this was the case when the Judges had below them all the hierarchy of the Resident Magistrates and the Constabulary in the hands of the Central Authority, what would be the case when most of the Judges would have been appointed by a Ministry dependent upon an elective Parliament, when all the Judges would be removable by an Address from that Parliament, and when they would stand almost alone in supporting the old ideas of law and order against a sea of sentiment of a very different nature? Well, but the Judges and the Magistracy are the masters of the police. Being the masters they, in the long run, set in order the civil police, the bailiffs, and the process-servers—if there will be any process-servers in degenerate Ireland. It is all very well to say that there will be the Constabulary. But the Constabulary will be, as a police, a moribund force. At any moment the new Parliament could put an end to them as police by setting up a civil police themselves. They would be part of the British garrison, and a garrison cannot do police duty. It cannot punish people for sending threatening letters; it cannot enforce civil payments; it cannot arrest offenders and do police work on its own account. All it can do is to come in and strengthen and aid the Civil Authority and interfere on great occasions; and it is quite plain that the Civil Authority can, in the long run, only act through civil means. Now, I maintain, Sir, that that state of things which, I believe, I have described with perfect accuracy—[*A laugh from the Irish Members.*] I am glad of that salutation; it reminds me of old days. Well, I believe that such a state of things is absolutely inconsistent with the lines which I had laid down for myself in that speech in Warwickshire. I know it is true that before I joined the Cabinet the present Home Secretary (Mr. Childers) had expressed himself practically in favour of the scheme adopted in this Bill; but that any responsible body of Ministers, whatever else they did, should put the keeping of the police, the enforcement of civil obligations, and the safety and property of our fellow-citizens throughout Ireland in the hands of an elective Irish Parliament I could not believe. And now, Sir, I will give my reasons. The contention of those who desire to set up this Parliament in Ireland rests upon the assertion that Parliament would be actuated, in the main, by the sentiments of the Party led by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell); and of that Party it is no exaggeration to say that all through last Parliament everyone, from the Viceroy down to the constable, who endeavoured to enforce the law—[An hon. Member: The English law.] [*Cries of* "Order!"]—were the subject of the denunciations of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his followers. Well, Sir, I want to refer to a little incident for the sake of the new Members of the House. During the 30 months from the beginning of 1880 onwards there were 44 agrarian murders committed with impunity. During the first nine months of 1882, 26 political and agrarian assassinations took place in Ireland, which were all of them unpunished, and then, in September, 1882, the law began to be enforced. A murderer was brought to justice, and under great difficulties; because the attack on Mr. Field, and the attack on Judge Lawson's life, showed that every honest Judge and bold juryman carried his life in his hands. What was the result of the Government and of the Judges and juries doing their duty? It was that, whereas there had been 26 assassinations in the first nine months of 1882, in the following 12 months there was only one. What course would hon. Members have expected the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his followers to take? You would have expected them to say—"We differ from the Government on political matters very widely indeed; but the stain of unpunished crime no longer rests on our land, and we applaud the men who have done their best to remove that stain from our land, and who have done it successfully." Was that the course taken by the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his followers? On the contrary, on the very first opportunity, in the House of Commons, they moved the following Resolution, and you must read it by the now dying light of the terrible difficulties against which law was struggling in Ireland at the time. The Resolution was to the effect:—

> "That justice is administered in a most partial and prejudiced spirit, and that the confidence of the people in the application of the Law is destroyed by a system of jury packing which has already, in the opinion of the vast majority of the Irish people, led to many iniquitous sentences, and the execution of innocent persons." [*Ironical cheers from the Home Rule Members.*]

Major SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I rise to a point of Order. I wish, Sir, to call attention to the persistent interruptions of hon. Members below the Gangway.

Mr. TREVELYAN: It is an expression of opinion on their part, and I am too old a Member to be disconcerted by it. Hon. Members opposite, no doubt, even while they were cheering, remembered that the Administration which they were denouncing, at any rate, prevented the murder of a good many innocent persons. The Resolution proceeded—

> "While it is practically impossible to obtain justice or protection for the masses of the people from the present administrators of the Law."

Well, these opinions have been expressed more recently, and in a very extreme manner. Here is a sentence from a speech of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) on November 22, 1885, which I must read in order to cite him as an authority. The hon. Member said—

> "A Manifesto has been issued by the Leaders of the Irish Party in England asking the Irish electors to vote everywhere throughout England against Liberals and Radicals, and in favour of the Tories. With that Manifesto I heartily concur. It was drawn up with my approval and sanction, and I will only say that I trust every Irishman, whatever his personal interest may be, will vote against the Liberal Party."

What is the Manifesto which the hon. Member for the City of Cork is willing to adopt? It uses this language: that the late Government—Mr. Gladstone's Government—practised a system of coercion more brutal than any previous Administration. Juries were attacked, and it was said that without precedent, even in Liberal Administrations, innocent men were hanged or sentenced to a living death in long terms of penal servitude, and that representative Liberals in Ireland were men like Mr. Forster and Earl Spencer, who had left more hateful memories in Ireland than any statesmen of the century. Why did Earl Spencer leave such a very hateful memory? I should imagine the reason was that he vindicated law and order. That is what justifies the hatred in the eyes of those who, with others gathered around them entertaining the same sentiments, will form the vast majority of the new Parliament. I ask hon. Gentlemen to say whether, in their heart of hearts, they feel justified in committing to a Parliament actuated by such feelings the charge of tracking out and punishing crime, of discouraging the disorderly classes, and of encouraging and keeping in countenance quiet people who ask nothing of the Government except the privilege of going about their business in peace without injury to their neighbours. The Attorney General for England (Sir Charles Russell), speaking at Hackney quite recently, said—

> "They knew there came from Ireland a loud-voiced opposition to any fair consideration of this question; but he warned them, and he warned the English people, to distrust this loud-voiced protest, because it would be found to come mainly from two classes—from the landlord class, and from the remnants of the privileged class, who had never forgotten their ascendancy, and who could not reconcile themselves to the new state of political equality that now existed."

Sir, that is not the case. It is not only the landlords and the red-hot Orangemen who feel apprehension, but it is everyone who has offended the Land League—or the National League, as it was called afterwards—by not taking an active part in its support; everyone who has asserted his legal right to work for whom he likes, or to take farms from whom he likes; everyone who has taken any part in bringing to justice those whom the organs of the new dominant Administration and Party regard as victims and martyrs; every quiet citizen, and every member of that minority which would not be a minority if both Parties would join in a determination that law and order should no longer be trifled with in Ireland any more than it is trifled with in Yorkshire or Somersetshire. Now, Sir, what I am saying now, the Prime Minister allowed me to say in at least 50 speeches when I was his Irish Secretary. That was what my Colleagues thought then, and that is what I think still. All of us were of one mind in June last. In that month —and I am not telling a Cabinet secret, because, to the best of my recollection, the Prime Minister announced it to the world—we were unanimously resolved, some, perhaps, reluctantly, to support Earl Spencer in asking for the renewal of some of the provisions of the Crimes Act, which might, perhaps, be terrible to bad citizens, but which, I am quite certain, would not have made any good citizen uncomfortable. What has happened since that time? What has happened since the day when we all opposed Home Rule? I cannot tell the House how much I dislike to seem to hon. Members to be arguing against their strongest convictions; but it is absolutely necessary, in order that I may express myself. What has happened since? [An hon. MEMBER: 86 Members have been returned for Ireland in favour of Home Rule.] I know what in private conversation people say has taken place in order to make Home Rule necessary now and not in June last; but I prefer to take it, not from the talk of the Lobbies, but from the speech of an important Minister. I will take the speech of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley); and I think, from conversations I have heard, that a great many people will agree with what he said. In the first place, he said that there were 86 Irish Members in the House supporting the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell); but, I would ask, is it credible that Earl Spencer, or anyone who had been in Ireland for the last three or four years, could have imagined there could be the least doubt about the result of the General Election? Talk about June last, or the June before that, has it not been certain for ever so long that, if we had to go to the country on the old franchise, the hon. Member for the City of Cork would have come back with certainly not 10 supporters less than he has at the present moment? That was my opinion, and the opinion of the officials in Ireland. The next point my right hon Friend mentioned is that the Roman Catholic Church has declared for Nationalism—I am using his own words. I ask, again, is it credible that anyone who was behind the scenes in Ireland in 1882 and 1883 could not see the direction in which the Roman Catholic priesthood was going? I venture to say that if in those years there was any district in which it was difficult to maintain law and order where there were evil influences at work, if there were any districts in which disorder was far too strong for the law, it was the districts where there was an active and energetic priest, or, more probably, a curate who was not very scrupulous about the language he used, and who, we sometimes thought, was not very particular about those of his parishioners, whom he appeared to regard with approbation. Every month it became plainer that the moderate Bishops and the older priests were less able to keep their hold, until at last they lost it altogether. That is the case now; but everyone in the position of a Cabinet Minister must have known it in June, 1885. The third point which my right hon. Friend puts forward is the influence of the Irish in America. Well, the influence of the Irish in America was as great in June last as it is now; but it is a very dangerous argument to use for doing anything which otherwise you would not probably be prepared to do. I will quote a few words from the speech of the Prime Minister, in which he spoke of the assassination literature in America. The Prime Minister said that there was a knot of Irishmen—not Americans—who were not ashamed to point out how British ships could be blown into the air, and how certain men should be made the objects of the knife of the assassin because they did not conform to the rules which those persons chose to lay down. Now, it may be a knot who write such matter as this; but I am afraid that those who read it cannot be described by so limited a word. If my right hon. Friend rates the American influence by the amount of money that comes from America, I agree with him that it is very great; but if he thinks that on account of that influence so manifested we ought in any way to mould our legislation in accordance with American sentiment, I think that he makes one of the most grievous mistakes it is possible to make. Who is the most prominent representative of that particular way of thinking in America? It is Mr. Ford, of *The Irish World.* [*Interruption.*]

MR. SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. Member for East Cavan (Mr. O'Hanlon) not to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. TREVELYAN: If we are to measure Mr. Ford's influence by the surest of all tests—the amount of money he has contrived to collect—by that influence he is not only the most powerful newspaper editor in America, but the most powerful newspaper editor of all time. Not only in his paper does Mr. Ford write up as a heroine the woman who was connected with what he calls "the victory in the Phœnix Park," but it was Mr. Ford who sent £300 to the families of the men who suffered for that murder, carefully excepting the families of those who pleaded guilty to it, because to plead guilty of a murder, in his eyes, is a crime that cannot be wiped out. Does this House believe that Mr. Ford, and such as he, will be contented with the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman? Does the right hon. Gentleman believe that he will be satisfied until everyone who has been brought to justice, and sent into penal servitude during the last four years for crime, has been released, and until what ought to be the machinery of law and order has been converted into an instrument of terrorism and oppression? I have been told in private circles that we ought to let the dead past bury its dead; that the hateful incidents of 1881 and 1882 ought to be forgotten; and I have further been told that we ought not to allow our attitude in this matter to be vindictive. But I deny that it is vindictive to say that the Nationalist Party in Ireland—I do not refer to any particular man—by the laxity of its attitude towards crime, has not established such a title as would justify us in handing over to it the lives, the property, and freedom of Ireland, which have suffered enough, God knows, already. Those who hold the language I am holding are assailed with charges of desertion and disloyalty from quarters from which they ought to be very little expected. In December last the hon. Member for the City of Cork urged every Irishman to vote against a Liberal who would not accept Home Rule, and in preference to vote for a Conservative. I shall not forget the energetic protests that were made by the newspapers, in which appeared letters from Members of Parliament asking Liberals to vote for Conservatives. Those of us who have protested silently and most respectfully against the introduction of this Bill—

for hitherto we have not said one single word in public—have been threatened on all sides with the extinction of our political careers; and I must say that my sense of political morality was very much shocked by the fact that nine-tenths of the newspaper correspondents, in referring to my action, that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), and that of my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) in this matter, have discussed it, not as being a matter of right or wrong, but as to the effect it will have upon our future political career. Upon a question like this who cares for a career, and who cares for one's political future? There are other careers open to honest and industrious men; and if there is no other career open to us, there is open to us the career of a private citizen who has not got it upon his conscience that he gave over to the tender mercies of a separate Parliament in Ireland—in which Parliament men like Sheridan and Egan are pretty sure to be prominent Members—the law-abiding citizens of the country. There is one other point that I must draw from my Irish experience, and it is this. I think there is no precedent in Ireland which will really hold water for having a police force that does not depend upon a Central Government. There was a separate police force in Belfast; but in Belfast, although there were no agrarian crimes, such was the condition of society that the experiment had to be abandoned; and I appeal to the hon. and gallant Gentleman who sits below me (Colonel Salis-Schwabe) whether, two years ago, during the Ulster meetings, the determined handling of his Cavalry alone did not save the fields of Ulster from one of the most formidable outbreaks, and perhaps massacres, that had ever occurred in the vicinity? If there had not been at that time a Central Government having control alike of the military and the police, there would have been disturbances in Ulster which would over and over again almost have approached the dignity of civil war. It is said that the Conservatives are to blame. It is said that they broke off the continuity of Earl Spencer's method of government. I have never concealed my regret, and a somewhat even stronger feeling, at the course which was then adopted. I took a very active part in the last Election, and I was actuated chiefly by the sentiments I felt on account of certain speeches made by right hon. Members opposite; but that is not a reason why I will not justify, and justify 50 times over, all the actions and words which led us to make speeches against them during the Election, because I think right hon. Gentlemen opposite wanted firmness, and showed a tendency to words conciliating favour and making a wholesale surrender, in which they proposed to give up that hold over law and order which they could never get again. That is the first point upon which I left the Cabinet. The House will be glad to hear there were only two. The other point was the question of the land. It is not necessary for me to say, after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, that we had before us in the Cabinet a Bill for the purpose of enabling landlords to sell—making it certain of their being able to sell—on the ground that they might be expected to regard the Parliament which we are going to institute by this Bill as absolutely destructive of their interests. Now, I know what is due to Cabinet propriety, and I know the rule of the House. I am, therefore, not going to discuss a scheme which is not now before us, or to enter into details with regard to it. But we are discussing a scheme for the future government of Ireland, and the Prime Minister, in the first and most emphatic words of his speech to-night, said that the question of the land was closely and inseparably connected with the question of the government of Ireland. And he plainly indicated that that part of the inseparable corollary to the scheme was that there should be another scheme to enable landlords to fly from what they might regard as "the wrath to come." It was to that scheme that I had grave and insuperable objections, and it was that scheme which formed the ground on which I left the Cabinet. In the first place, landlords are not the only people whose interests are not affected and whose apprehensions are raised by a proposal to establish a separate Parliament in Ireland. So far from that being the case, they are a very small section of the people who will be injured by the carrying out of this scheme. If we set up a Parliament which, by our own confession, we cannot trust with exacting the payment of rents, and those judicial rents fixed by the State, what obligation is there which is unpleasant to the constituents of this Irish Parliament which it will oblige them to fulfil? I absolutely refuse to guarantee the payment of £500,000 to this Duke and £750,000 to that Marquess merely because they happen to be landlords, and yet allow the poor doctor, and lawyer, and clergyman, and Sheriff's officer, and process server, aye, and even witnesses in the old trials, to remain absolutely without protection or compensation of any kind. I object to give so much to these great men to go off and to leave these poor people behind. Here is a poor fellow who, in order to keep his wife and children from starving, has taken a farm which was under the ban of the League, or who works for a "Boycotted" farmer, and you leave him in Ireland, while you give large compensation to his landlord, who may go to the Highlands, or Paris, or anywhere else he likes, with hundreds of thousands of pounds in his pocket, which you may call Irish money if you like, but which, as we shall prove, will in the long run turn out to be the money of the hard-working and over-burdened constituents of England and Scotland. My other objection was that you cannot limit the buying out of the landlords. That is quite impossible. If you buy out one because you think it is not safe for him to stay in Ireland, you must buy out all who wish to be bought out. You must buy them out at whatever the land is worth according to the scale you choose to fix, and when you have bought them out you will never see the colour of your money. There is no plan, neither that of Mr. Giffen nor of anybody else, for repayment to the Treasury which will secure the regularity of the payment of rent by the Irish farmer, and the security which, in the long run, this country will have for its money will depend on the willingness of the Irish farmer to pay rent.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must remind the right hon. Gentleman that he is going into considerable detail on the subject of a Bill which is not before the House.

Mr. TREVELYAN: It is needless for me to say, Sir, that I bow to your ruling; but I hope the House will excuse me if I have been led by paragraphs in the newspapers, and what was said in the Lobby, into supposing that this would partake, perhaps, too exclusively of the character of a Ministerial explanation. But I clearly see that I have been under a misapprehension, and I have been carried too far by that idea. I have very little more to say. I will only say that this buying out of the landlords is extremely important, because it will be part of the financial details of the present scheme of my right hon. Friend, and the financial details of that scheme, constitute exactly that portion of it which I regard with the most apprehension. It was impossible to listen without the most absorbed admiration to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. Such a mastery of financial details astonished even those who have heard some of his Budget speeches. As I listened to him I could not but think of a sentence of M. Thiers, in which he described how dismayed were all the friends and followers of Napoleon when they saw him planning with great military ability and mathematical precision schemes for the invasion of England or of Russia, forgetting all the while some small matter of fact that lay deep in the circumstances of nature and which would spoil all his calculations. And I cannot but think that the right hon. Gentleman, in making his calculations, has left out of account, not only Irish human nature, but human nature itself. Here is a country intensely national, which is characterized by great intensity of political opinion, which, when she has got all that this Bill proposes to give, will be practically independent—for if I know anything of Ireland she will certainly regard herself as such—and which will be asked to pay to a neighbouring nation, including its contribution to the Sinking Fund, £3,500,000 a-year. This sum she will soon begin to regard as a species of English tribute. If you add to that £500,000 a-year—[An hon. Member: £1,000,000]—well, £1,000,000—if you add to that £1,000,000 a-year for keeping up this English Constabulary, you have a sum of £4,500,000 which Ireland will have to pay annually over and above what it may have to pay in respect of loans and by way of instalments of the Sinking Fund, and the people will say that these payments are the consequences of that English connection which they will affirm was forced upon them against their will.

Unfortunately, this is just the moment which a very able financier—Mr. Giffen—selected for informing the Irish people that, after making the most careful calculations, they are terribly overtaxed. There is something ominous in the unanimity with which Mr. Giffen's opinions have been adopted by hon. Members opposite. Well, it is now proposed to make this amount of taxation permanent and eternal, and to keep it at its present figure, in order, according to the Irish idea, that the Irish may pay £4,500,000 a-year to the English Treasury. The Irish Parliament will consider that the Irish nation will pay £8,350,000 in taxation, besides so many millions in the shape of rent, and that they will only have £3,000,000 net to spend upon themselves. The right hon. Gentleman talked of the Colonial system. He told us that he was going to introduce something like a Colonial system in Ireland, and he reminded us of the loyalty of the Colonies. To begin with, it is not too much to say that the Colonies liked us better when the Colonial system was set up than the Irish do now, and then the Colonies have not to pay over £4,500,000 a-year to this country. They pay nothing at all; and when they send a company of soldiers to our aid, or an iron-clad gunboat, we rightly feel the greatest gratitude towards them. How long, I should like to know, will it be before a Resolution denouncing this English tribute will be brought forward in the Irish Parliament? How long will it be before it is passed, and how long will it be before any English Ministry which refuses to accept it will have ceased to stand? Why, Sir, I was reading a passage in *United Ireland* the other day, in which that very able paper tells us how we are to be treated if we do not grant a separate Parliament. We are threatened

"with the vicissitudes for ever lowering over an Empire having an overgrown population, a decaying trade, and millions of enemies in its bosom."

Mr. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman read on?

Mr. TREVELYAN: I will read on. The hon. Gentleman will see that I have not taken the passage for any unfair purpose. We are told that—

"There would, of course, be a Coercion Act. But there have been 50 such Acts in the course of this century, and yet the Irish cause is a thousandfold stronger than it ever was. The most stupendous Parliamentary scandal ever witnessed would be followed by the most horrible suppressed civil war in the country where every peasant had learnt to laugh at the terror of the prison and the plank bed, and to treat his rulers to armed insurrection without handling a gun."

There is only one sentence more; but as it applies to my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), perhaps it is not necessary that I should read it.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN: Allow me to explain. I have had to write to the English papers to complain of the passage read by the right hon. Gentleman as a most garbled and misleading extract from an article, the object of which was directly opposite.

Mr. TREVELYAN: I take in *United Ireland*, and this is a cutting out of *United Ireland* itself. But the use which I am going to make of this passage is one which I think the hon. Gentleman will not object to. The hon. Member gives these as the dangers which will overtake England if a separate Parliament is not granted; but it seems to me that the same threats will be equally useful hereafter even if it is granted. They will be useful for getting everything which this Bill omits to give. When it is a question of the interest on the land loan, or the instalments of the Sinking Fund, when it is a question of payment of debt incurred in wars in which Ireland has had no interest, this sort of argument will be brought forward. I would begin by disregarding it now. If you regard it now you will have to listen to it in the future, when it will have a great deal more force and more reason than it has at present; because I do not say the Irish nation, but no nation that exists in the world, when it has got a separate Parliament, will be willing to go on for ever exacting rents from its farmers which it will consider as rent payable to foreign landlords, and to pay taxes which are to be handed over to something very like a foreign Treasury. It is said that an Irish Parliament will be unable to hamper the English Parliament, because it will be strictly limited in the subjects it can discuss. Sir, how can you limit any Parliament in the subjects it will discuss, let alone a Parliament in a country which has produced such men as Wolfe, Tone, O'Connell, Sheil, and John Mitchell? Do hon. Members think we shall be able, by any paper bonds, to keep the Irish from discussing and passing Resolutions with a view to taking action upon any Foreign or Colonial question? And I am afraid that in matters relating, for instance, to France, Italy, or the United States, or the quarrels of Orangemen and Catholics in Canada, the opinion of an Irish Parliament might very often be found not exactly the same as our own. Separation, Sir, is preferable to such a course. Then we should know the worst at once; whereas now we shall come to it through a vista of bad blood and quarrels between the two nations which will greatly embitter us. And if we embark on this course we may just as well come to a separation once for all. Now, Sir, there is only one observation more that I wish to make, and it is with reference to what is very often said to me in the Lobbies, and which I know very much influences some hon. Members—I only say some—but some of the more strong-willed of my Friends have talked to me in the following strain:—"We have got in the end the guarantee of force." I will read one sentence from the letter of an exceedingly able public man—not, I may say, one of my Cabinet Colleagues—who thoroughly knows Ireland, and who takes the strongest view in favour of this scheme. I asked him what would be our security? He told me what he considered would be the security of our money, and then he said—

> "If the Irish State repudiates, the country would have to be reconquered, and the payment enforced as now."

He said further—

> "If we now do everything that will conciliate Ireland, then we should be able to invade and reconquer her with a clear conscience if she breaks faith with us."

Now, in the first place, I cannot help thinking that the reconquest of Ireland would be a very much tougher job than Gentlemen who say that think. I believe there is hardly an Irishman in the country who would not fight to prevent a nation which had neglected its duties in Ireland coming back with an army. And as to "a clear conscience" a more immoral proposal never was made. The Central Government now is possessed of a vast machinery, and a very effective machinery that has gradually grown up through long years, which has a multitude of friends and well-wishers in Ireland, who were loyal once because they had privilege and ascendency, but who would have no privilege or ascendency hereafter; who have an affection for our Government because they consider that under it they can go about in peace and safety; and we are asked to throw to the winds all this machinery, to sacrifice and alienate all our friends and well-wishers, and then after years of misrule and anarchy to go with a clear conscience with an army to reconquer the country. That is the position to which Gentlemen are reduced who find it comfortable, for the moment, to give Ireland a separate Parliament; but who cannot disguise from themselves that a separate Parliament is in the end equivalent to disruption of the Empire. And now, Sir, what we are asked for is an alternative scheme. I am not going to detain the House with an alternative scheme at this time of night. Fortunately it is not because I have not got one, for the main outline of any alternative scheme should be, in my opinion, to maintain law and order in Ireland in the hands of the Central Government—in the hands of the Ministers responsible to the Parliament here. If you do this it will enable you to do what nothing else will enable you to do—namely, to dispense with the necessity of endeavouring to solve the absolutely insoluble problem of buying out the Irish landlords. At the same time, in the interests both of Ireland and of the British taxpayer, I would make freely elected Irish Local Bodies responsible for education, higher, middle, and lower; for the superintendence of local government; for poor relief; and for what is called the development of the resources of Ireland in every respect. These Bodies should have all the powers that now lie with the Imperial Parliament or the Lord Lieutenant for the arrangement of Railway, Tramway, Canal, and Harbour Bills. To all these Bodies I would allot, with a generous hand, and once for all, their share of the produce of the taxes, so as to make them responsible for the local finances of Ireland; and what is required over and above should be raised as in England and Scotland by local taxation. To these Bodies should be committed full power of local administration and local taxation; but they should have no Executive power over the incidence of local taxation or over valuation and assessment, in order that injustice should not be done indirectly between class and class. The desire of the great body of the people of this country has long been to see a sense of responsibility awakened in Ireland, and to see that sense of responsibility grow up under the security of law and order exercised by the Central Government. This plan, or something like it, if introduced by a powerful Minister, would, I am satisfied, have commanded the confidence of the enormous majority of our Party, and under present circumstances it would, I believe, have recommended itself to a great number of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I feel satisfied, too, that there are many in Ireland who would have accepted it with a genuine though perhaps a somewhat silent welcome. It would have been passed in Parliament, and in its working it would have tended surely and steadily to the pacification and prosperity of the country. It would have had one main recommendation, and that is it would not have been extorted, but it would have been conceded. I do not know anything of more serious augury to the future not only of Ireland, but of England, and not only of England, but of the Empire, than that Ministers, in their recent addresses, and their followers, in their speeches, have fallen back on an argument which they consider unanswerable —the *ultima ratio* in this great controversy—that if you do not give Home Rule with a generous hand you will be reduced to the terrible necessity of performing the most primary and elementary duties of a Government in the face of the disturbers of law and order. What is wanted in Ireland is justice, firmness, courage, and patience, which is the highest kind of courage. I am obliged to the House, and to all parts of the House, for having heard me out. I was most anxious to be heard while giving reasons for taking what to me was almost the heartbreaking step of leaving a Liberal Government, and that, too, a Government presided over by my right hon. Friend. His eloquent words are still ringing in our years; but, in spite of that, I hope hon. Members will reflect that, perhaps two years, 10 years, or 20 years hence the still small voice that speaks to our hearts alone may tell us that at the greatest crisis which I hope will ever occur in the history of our country we were led, not by an ignoble attachment to Party, but by a merited love and reverence for a great and good man, to do that which we never can redress or expiate.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to find that we have not been disappointed by the Lobby rumours which have been circulated for some days past regarding the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), and that he has, after all, like the celebrated but unsuccessful French General who defended Paris against the Germans, got his own plan, and that he did not think the hour too late at the close of his interesting but not very fair speech to give us the details of this important plan. But I noticed it as a somewhat significant, although it must have been to the right hon. Gentleman a rather discouraging fact, that the gradual unfolding of his plan elicited no enthusiasm of any account from any section of the House. It was not until he had pointedly appealed to hon. Members of the Conservative Party that at last some small section of them gave him a cheer or two, and then he did succeed in getting some faint applause from a few Gentlemen around the Gangway. The Conservative Party has always been most remarkable for its discipline. Being somewhat a small Party, and very often in a minority, it is bound to be remarkable for its discipline; and, doubtless, in its reception of the plan of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone), it had in its mind the declaration of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), when he announced in a speech some two or three years since—

> "Concede nothing more to the Irish Nationalists, either in the direction of local self-government, county boards, or anything else."

Of course, the rank and file of the Conservative Party, under these circumstances, could not have ventured to applaud the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) without breaking from their allegiance to the noble Lord the Member for Paddington. I may be told that the noble Lord has improved since then. Some say that he has been flirting with Home Rule and a separate Irish Parliament, the apparition which has caused so much consternation in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan). I know nothing about those things, and I shall not express any opinion upon them. But I do think that the right hon. Gentleman, in the comparison which he appeared to draw between the action of Earl Spencer in remaining in the Cabinet, and his own action in leaving it, to Earl Spencer's disadvantage, scarcely stood upon a very firm or satisfactory ground. Englishmen love the man who fights his own corner out to the end, and Earl Spencer certainly did do that. He went over to Ireland to fight a battle which was not his—to fight the battle of the Irish landlords, and he stuck to his post. He faced every danger, every risk, both physical and otherwise; but the right hon. Gentleman opposite did something which looked very like running away from his post. Although the right hon. Gentleman attempted to explain to the House his reasons for leaving the Cabinet, he did not try to explain to the House why he left his position of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. Does the right hon. Gentleman propose, in the event of his plan being carried out, to compete for the Office of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant? If he be not willing to assume the Office himself, is it very chivalrous of him to open such a tempting door to future aspirants? The right hon. Gentleman attempted to prove to the House what terrible things we should do in an Irish Parliament by making an allusion to the Motion which I moved in the last Parliament in 1883. Mr. Speaker, I do not desire to go back over old quarrels. It generally happens that those who are defeated dislike to recur to those distant and unhappy recollections; but I have nothing to retract in regard to the terms of my Motion. The right hon. Gentleman read that Resolution to the House. It complained of the execution and imprisonment of innocent men. I believed then, as I believe now, that innocent men were executed. I never accused the right hon. Gentleman or Earl Spencer of having believed the same thing. I did not accuse them of having sanctioned the execution of innocent men, knowing that they were innocent. But I can scarcely think that the right hon. Gentleman is of the same opinion to-day. How about the case of Bryan Kilmartin, who was sentenced to penal servitude for life, and who, upon the case being brought forward by us, and supported by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill)—if my memory serves me right—and one or two other prominent Conservative Members, was released during, I believe, the tenure of Office of the right hon. Gentleman himself? The right hon. Gentleman taunts us about the language of the Resolution to which I have referred, and about the language of the Manifesto which was issued by my hon. Friend the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor). But if I considered that all these things had taken place, was I not right, at the very height of this reign of terror in Ireland, to state so publicly? I do not see how, with any sort of consideration for my public duty as regards questions of law and order in Ireland, of which the right hon. Gentleman has constituted himself the sole champion to-night—I do not see how I could refrain from bringing these matters under the attention of the House. If the same thing were to occur again to-morrow, I should act in exactly the same way.

> "That in the captain's but a choleric word,
> Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy."

While the right hon. Gentleman bases such weighty arguments on the expressions contained in the Resolution to which he refers, and the expressions in the Manifesto of my hon. Friend, he passes over the language which has been used since then in Ireland by a very prominent Member of the late Administration—a man who was specially charged with the maintenance of law and order in Ireland—no less a personage than the Attorney General of the late Government (Mr. Holmes). Speaking at a public meeting in that country, the late Attorney General for Ireland asserted that the blood of Giffein was on the head of Earl Spencer. The right hon. Gentleman has no censure for that language. He does not pick out that language as an example of the great risk of intrusting the care of the lives of the Irish people to a future Conservative Ministry under the plan he has formulated to-night. Oh, no! he passes that by; but surely no language that was ever used by any of my hon. Friends exceeded in gravity the charge that I have just quoted, and which was made by the late Attorney General, that the blood of Giffein was on the head of Earl Spencer. Certainly the language used in the Resolution and in the Manifesto of my hon. Friend the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool was mildness itself in comparison. Well, Sir, of course, if the question of the future relations of England and Ireland is to be discussed with the heat—I will not say the ill-temper—shown by the right hon. Gentleman—but if this question of the future relations of England and Ireland is to be discussed with heat, it will undoubtedly increase the difficulty of discussion. But I hope the example of the right hon. Gentleman will not be imitated. I do not wish to go into a justification of our action in the last Parliament; but I could do so if I thought fit. I could remind the House of the agents used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) in upholding law and order. I could remind him of the result of the trial in the case of French, the Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary, a man whom the right hon. Gentleman actually did not shrink from defending in this House. But I do not desire to go into these things. I believe history will record that in every Resolution which we moved with reference to the administration of the right hon. Gentleman during his time of Office we were amply, and more than amply, justified by the terrible circumstances of the country. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of assassination literature, and would lead the House to believe that Irish sympathy in America for the cause of their native country is confined to a very few supporters of this assassination literature. He has spoken of Mr. Ford. All I can say with regard to Mr. Ford is that he has been constantly denouncing both myself and my policy during the last five years. The right hon. Gentleman is right in saying that this assassination literature is not American literature; and if he has studied it attentively he will also see that it is not Irish literature either. If he were to study the literature of America at the present moment he would find that the sympathy with the just settlement of the claims of Ireland by the concession of a domestic Legislature is shared by all classes in that country, whether they are Irish or native-born Americans; and it is more especially the native-born Americans who are welcoming the efforts of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone), in the belief that they will bring peace between England and Ireland, and more especially that they will bring peace between Irish-Americans and England. It is a remarkable fact that the great meetings which are now being held in every State in America in favour of Ireland are mainly called together and organized by native-born Americans, and by the editors and conductors of the purely American newspapers. We regard the fact that during the last five or six months we have succeeded in entirely gaining the sympathy of the two great American political Parties, the Democratic and the Republican, as an omen of great hope and the dawn of the future of our cause. The right hon. Gentleman, in speaking about the Land Purchase Bill, turned to the Radical Members sitting below him in order to try and catch a cheer or two in his denunciation of the proposal to give money to Irish landlords. Now, Sir, I do not propose to go into the merits of that question at any length; but regarding that matter just as I regard the other matter, I will only say that it is not out of the mouth of the right hon. Gentleman that such unkind words should proceed, because he himself brought in a Bill in the last Parliament, as a Member of the Government, for buying up the Irish landlords. If that Bill had succeeded in passing—unfortunately it was added to the long list of failures—and if it had been successful, which was a still more doubtful prospect, it would have necessitated an additional payment of a very large sum of money for the purpose of buying out the Irish landlords—the very thing which he denounces now with so much eloquence, in order, if he possibly can, to throw some discredit on the scheme now under the consideration of the House. Perhaps I may say, in leaving the right hon. Gentleman, as regards his picture of the horrible consequences which will result to Ireland and to England if any such proposal as that suggested in the Bill under discussion were adopted—the consequences of physical force, of rebellion, and of separation—that I believe, so far from anything of the kind happening, your guarantees for a peaceful solution between the two countries will be enormously increased. Why do I say that they will be enormously increased? They will be increased for several reasons. Why is there trouble in Ireland now? Why do the people talk about separation? Why does my hon. Friend the Member for Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) write what the right hon. Gentleman considers violent passages in *United Ireland?* It is because the people are desperate, and have nothing to love; but give them a Constitution, and they will be proportionately careful not to lose that. Every violent speech, every criminal action, will be so many nails driven into the coffin of their Constitution. You will have every guarantee you possess now. These cannot be weakened or diminished. You will have the Forces of the Crown, which will act just as freely and effectively as they act now. No possible adjunct to physical force can be gained by Irish support to such a measure. Even the control of the Constabulary is to be withheld from us until their character has been altered, because they are an armed force. Although it has been impossible, or very difficult, for England to govern Ireland without 15,000 armed policemen, we are expected to govern Ireland without any policemen at all. Certainly no additional strength can be added to the physical force argument; and you will have those guarantees of peace and contentment which have always accompanied, in the experience which we have had, the concession of these measures to the Colonies and to the countries of Europe. You will have these as your surest and best guarantees, in addition to those you possess at present. Now, Sir, I will pass on to the measure from the consideration of which my attention was withdrawn by the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. I desire to speak very briefly. It is difficult to express a definite or positive opinion with regard to a Bill before it has been printed. I should like to reserve a more definite and positive expression of opinion until I have seen the measure placed completely before us. I presume it will be issued on Monday. Still, however, I think it is right that I should say something about the merits of the Bill, as they have now been explained to us by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone). Allow me to say, Sir, that I think it will prove a happy and fortunate thing both for Ireland and England that there was one man living—one English statesman at all events—with the great power and extraordinary ability of the right hon. Gentleman, to lend his voice to poor, helpless Ireland on this question. He has devoted his great mind, his extraordinary energy, to the unravelling of this question, and to the construction of this Bill. It seemed to many people that the task might prove too large, too terrible, even for him. I believe it will not prove so. But whatever may be the fate of the measure, the cause of Ireland, the cause of Irish autonomy, will have gained enormously in a way it never could otherwise have gained by the genius of the right hon. Gentleman: He has drafted this Bill; he has explained it to the House in a speech of extraordinary power and eloquence. To Ireland, I suppose—to none of the sons of Ireland—at any time has there ever been given the genius and talent of the right hon. Gentleman—certainly nothing approaching to it in these days. I thank, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman for the energy and for the time he has devoted to this matter; and I believe sincerely in my heart that the result of it will be that the people of England will recognize as the result of what he has done, no less than the people of Ireland, that he has been to them a national benefactor. But there are, undoubtedly, great faults and blots in the measure. The right hon. Gentleman has had to meet very hostile criticism, and a very extraordinary state of affairs. He has seen his officers leaving his side one by one, and drawing their swords upon him as the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) did to-night. And he has had, I suppose, to shape his measure to meet the tremendous opposition which has been evoked against him. There are several points which it will be our duty when the measure reaches its Committee stage to oppose very strongly, and to press for their serious modification and amendment. The question of the Customs has been touched upon. In giving up the Customs we should practically give to you the whole control of six-eighths or three-fourths of the revenues of Ireland. It would be absolutely as much within your power as it is now, both as regards the original assessment of the taxes and the receiving of the money. The right hon. Gentleman has explained to us that, instead of our insisting on separate Custom-houses, England, by collecting the duties on whisky and tobacco in her own Custom-houses, gives £1,400,000 a-year. This, of course, is a very serious consideration, and it may be very fairly balanced against the surrender of the control of the Customs and Excise. But, at the same time, if the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister is to take credit for giving us that £1,400,000 as a consequence of the surrender of the Custom-houses and the collection of the revenues by the Imperial authority, I do not think he is entitled to claim credit for it a second time, and to make us pay out of the £1,400,000 £1,000,000 for the Irish Constabulary, over whom we are not to have any sort of control whatever, at all events for the present. Then there is the great question of the contribution to the Imperial Expenditure. I cannot admit—and I say it with great deference—either the justice or the liberality of the standard of comparison which the right hon. Gentleman has taken. It appears to be the amount of property which comes under assessment regarding the payment of Legacy and Succession Duties. That is the most unfavourable standard for us that the right hon. Gentleman could have chosen. Of course, I understand that he is anxious to make the best bargain he can for England, and to secure as large a contribution for the Imperial Treasury as possible; but he should also remember that Ireland is a very poor country, and that with such a small balance as he showed on the Budget of £400,000 a-year, it will be impossible for Ireland to have any credit for floating loans. Irish landlords now can borrow money at a low rate of interest for the improvement of their estates. Irish tenants can borrow money for improving their farms. Local bodies can borrow money for sanitary purposes within their jurisdiction. All these are very important matters. But we shall have to surrender all of them under the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman, and we shall be left with a Budget which only exceeds the annual balance by about £400,000 a-year, and a Budget arrived at on an estimate which necessitates that the consumption of spirits, not only in Ireland, but also in England, should continue at its present high rate, and, of course, that the duty should be kept as it is now. Probably, one of the first things that will happen in Ireland under an Irish Legislature will be the imposition of restrictions in regard to the sale of strong drink on Sundays as well as on other days, and certainly we must anticipate, and I should hope we can anticipate, a considerable reduction in the amount of the revenue derived from those duties. It is, therefore, scarcely fair, I think, to press us too closely, or to insist on driving too hard a bargain in this matter. If the sum is agreed upon, of course we must pay it; we must pay it, and we will pay it; but it would be most unfortunate if the right hon. Gentleman selected such a standard of comparison as would lead him to adopt the proportion of one-fifteenth, and thus bring about a future state of poverty in the Irish Exchequer. In that case only would there be any possibility of the danger which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) has conjured up as to the repudiation of the Imperial Debt, an attempt which, if it were made, would be entirely unsuccessful, because you have the collection of the Customs and the Excise absolutely in your own hands. When you are proposing a great settlement—a settlement which admittedly can only succeed if cheerfully accepted by public opinion in Ireland, and all its important provisions are recognized as just and equitable—is it worth while for a rich country like England, on the question of £1,000,000 one way or the other, to drive too hard a bargain? I have every conviction—I do not want to go into the question to-night; but after carefully reading the article by Mr. Giffen which has attracted so much attention, and a long communication which appears in *The Times* of this morning from a gentleman who evidently knows what he is writing about—I am convinced that it is clear that one-twentieth is a far better standard of the relative share of the two countries than that most unfortunate standard of one-fifteenth which the right hon. Gentleman has adopted. We could show several standards much more favourable to us, based upon the various commodities consumed in Ireland, and which will show that Ireland is a very much poorer country in comparison with England than is expressed by the proportion which the right hon. Gentleman has selected. I have every confidence that when the time comes when this Bill is in Committee, and when we put forward our case, the conscience, not only of the House of Commons, but of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will be touched in regard to this matter, and that the Prime Minister will see that his zeal for making a good bargain for his own country in Imperial questions has misled him into doing an unintentional injustice to Ireland in regard to this question of the contribution towards the Imperial Expenditure. I think, also, that the question of the Royal Irish Constabulary has been left in a most unsatisfactory condition. I maintain that it is most unfair to ask us to pay for a force, or at all events for a large proportion of a force, over which we are to have no control whatever. This, however, is also a matter upon which we shall probaby have more light when we see the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. There is another important point to which I wish to allude—namely, with regard to vote by Order. As explained by the right hon. Gentleman, to the first Order, elected by a fancy franchise, is given the right of hanging up any and every Bill for three years. I understood the words of the right hon. Gentleman to be these—"Three years, or until a dissolution, whichever is the longer." Well, I think that that would indicate three years as the minimum of time during which the first Order could hang up a Bill; and if a dissolution did not take place before three years the Bill would be hung up for a still longer period. I shall be very glad if I am mistaken on this point, and it is possible I may be; but in any case, whatever the period may be, it would be absolutely within the power of the first Order, in which, from the nature of the franchise, the popular Party in Ireland could not obtain many Representatives, to hang up any measure they pleased, and so to bring the whole proceedings of the Legislature to a deadlock. This is a very important point. I am one of those who have always insisted that a due proportion of representation should be given to the Protestant minority in Ireland. I would give them full representation according to their number, so far as the first Order proposed by the right hon. Gentleman goes, and anything also which would tend to prevent rash, hasty, ill-considered or revolutionary legislation I cordially welcome; but as far as the measure leads to obstruction more or less permanent to legislation, and the means of bringing about a deadlock on the part of a body of Members who can scarcely be said to be representative, I think that it ought to be modified so as to render such delay as that absolutely impossible. As regards the measure itself, the Prime Minister has truly said that it ought not to proceed unless it is cheerfully welcomed, not only by the Irish Members but by the Irish people. I cordially agree in that proposition, and I am convinced that if our views are fairly met in Committee regarding the defects to which I have briefly alluded, the result of this Bill will be to agreeably disappoint the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) and all those who think with him; that it will be cheerfully accepted by the Irish people and by their Representatives as a solution of the long-standing dispute between the two countries, and that it will lead to the prosperity and peace of Ireland and the satisfaction of England.

MR. PLUNKET (Dublin University): I do not intend to ask the indulgence of the House at any great length this evening, because I am in the unfortunate position of the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan). The Prime Minister has kept his secret so well up to the present time that we were left entirely in the dark as to the statement he was to make this evening. Of course, it was a very extraordinary speech; but it was extraordinary in several ways. I thought it was strange that the Prime Minister should indulge in great elaboration of certain somewhat whimsical proposals which he placed before the House, and that he should pass over, in a cursory and perfunctory way, other really important matters. All discussion on that part of his statement must be completely postponed for the present, owing to the manner in which the Prime Minister handled that part of his speech. As to the position of Ulster, whether it is to be brought under the control of the new statutory Parliament, or is to have a Parliament of its own, or is to be left to the control of the Imperial Parliament, that is a matter of so little importance that it may be thrown over altogether. But there were some points which came out pretty plainly in the statement of the Prime Minister, and the first and most important of these points was, in my opinion, that this Bill cannot be truly said to be a Bill for the repeal of the Union, because it is a Bill that goes much further than that which is usually spoken of as a measure for the repeal of the Union. And I think that to-morrow morning, when the public opinion of this country comes to study this Bill, it will be amazed to find that it is a large, revolutionary, and far-reaching proposal; and it will be still more amazed when the proposals themselves are considered and confronted with the modest assurances which have been given and the view which for the last few weeks the Prime Minister has led the country to entertain as to the character of his proposals. I believe that the opinion of the country will be that it is not the mild and simple scheme which the country was led to expect, but that it has a perilous character. There is another matter which comes out plainly, and it is the relations which have been established between the Prime Minister and the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). The hon. Member for the City of Cork has spoken his evening in language of the most charming confidence, and almost of affection, of the Prime Minister. He said in the course of his speech that he, for one, was not a man who liked to rake up old quarrels. I thought that a very happy observation on his part, because there was passing through my mind at the moment a speech made not so many years ago by the Prime Minister at Knowsley, when he described the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his supporters as men who were—

> "Not only pursuing a policy of rapine, but were marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire."

A few days afterwards the hon. Member for the City of Cork made a speech in reply to the present Prime Minister, and his language on that occasion was even more vigorous than that of the Prime Minister towards him. I have not, unfortunately, that speech by me at this moment; but it was not exactly the same kind of language as that in which he has this evening spoken of "the one man living who is willing to lend his voice to poor, helpless Ireland." The country will doubtless be a good deal struck with this wonderful reconciliation and this making up of old quarrels. But, as I was thinking of that Knowsley speech, I remembered how the Prime Minister in that speech called upon the Loyalists of Ireland to be more vigorous in their resistance to the policy and the action of the hon. Member for the City of Cork, and said he had chided them, and was glad to say they had at length taken action against that Party which was marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire. A good many friends of mine at that time did act on the advice of the Prime Minister, and they put their lives in peril in resisting the policy of the hon. Member for the City of Cork; and now the recompense they are to receive is that if the Bill were unfortunately to be carried—as I am well assured it never will be carried—they will be handed over, for the loyalty with which they responded to the call of the Prime Minister's invitation to resist the hon. Member for the City of Cork, to the control of a Parliament in Dublin, which would practically be a Parliament of the National League, and of an Administration in Ireland which would probably be composed of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his immediate political Friends. Now, there are some points in the statement of the Prime Minister to which I should like to call attention. The Prime Minister said this was not a Bill for the repeal of the Union, and that he never would entertain such a proposal. Why, this Bill goes much further; for it establishes a Parliament much more independent of the Imperial Parliament in London than would be created by the repeal of the Union, and in two important points. In the first place, there was a kind of veto reserved to the Imperial Parliament at the time of the Parliament which sat in Dublin from 1782 to 1800; there was the Great Seal of England, which was necessary to the enactment of any law that might be passed by the Irish Parliament. But, what is much more important is this—that, as I understand the proposal of the

Prime Minister, the administration of the Government in Ireland is to be entirely dependent on, and solely responsible to, the statutory Parliament to be created there; whereas, as everybody knows, the Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary who were in Office in the last century were perfectly free from the Parliament of that day. There is another point which I should like to raise. Supposing these checks are disregarded, and the statutory Parliament in Dublin is unwilling to observe the restrictions and checks put upon it, how are they to be enforced? Who is to decide? I have heard nothing of a Supreme Court, or of any power to enforce them save this—that the Lord Lieutenant is to be left in charge and control of the military forces in Ireland. But what does that mean? Why, I suppose that in the enforcement of any civil matter the Commander of the Forces in Ireland would be obliged to give his assistance to the Secretary of the Irish Administration; that is to say—reasoning by analogy—that force is to be exercised in putting down any resistance which may occur in this National Parliament. The proposal amounts to this—that the Lord Lieutenant is to assert his authority by a series of *coups d'état.* On the other hand, if the Parliament in London is to have the means of enforcing its views, and the National Parliament has a desire to shake off any trammels which may now be imposed upon it, it may have recourse to a Declaration of Rights. Then, where is to come your authority to decide upon the matter, and where is your authority to enforce your will upon the Parliament of that country? Then, Sir, the Prime Minister, in a decided manner, said that it was his intention by his proposal to maintain the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Now, I do not know whether any right hon. Gentleman is going to speak from the Government Bench this evening; but I should like to have an explanation how the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament is to be maintained. As I understand the proposal, it is maintained by excluding the Irish Members wholly from attendance here, and also releasing the statutory Parliament from all the control which might be exercised by the Imperial Parliament in Imperial matters. Now, there was an observation made by the Prime Minister in his speech to which I should like to call attention. He spoke of the old Parliaments of Ireland, and said they had existed for 500 years, while England was growing in greatness and glory. That is an entire mistake. I venture to state, on the high authority of Mr. Isaac Butt, that the Parliaments of the Edwards and Henrys were mere inventions of the English—irregular in their constitution and place and time of meeting, without any of the attributes of Legislative or even Deliberative Assemblies. It is, therefore, absurd to speak of these 500 years. As a matter of fact, the only part of the time that the Irish Parliament was independent—namely, the last 18 years of the last century—was not a time when the greatness of England was growing, or her affairs were particularly prosperous abroad. But what is the whole argument of this vast and revolutionary movement? Why, as I understand, it is to develop a nationality in Ireland as distinctive in every way as it can possibly be from the Welsh and Scotch nationalities. The right hon. Gentleman said—"Why should not a man be a patriot in Ireland, and take an interest also in Imperial concerns?" Certainly, that is my view of patriotism. But the right hon. Gentleman would exclude Members of the Irish Parliament from all opportunity of exercising patriotism by preventing the Irish Parliament from having any opportunity of taking any part at all in Imperial affairs. There was another very remarkable observation of the Prime Minister. He thinks it but fair that the Judges in Ireland should have their retiring pensions, because, in administering the law, they have brought themselves in collision with the national sentiment. Is the national sentiment with which they were brought into collision the kind of sentiment which the right hon. Gentleman is anxious to cherish and develop in Ireland? Again, the right hon. Gentleman proposes that 28 unhappy Irish Peers should be sent back to the first Order of this new statutory Parliament in Ireland. Well, I was asking myself what can they have done to exasperate the Prime Minister? To my horror, he told me, the next moment, that, as a Member for the University of Dublin, I might have the opportunity of going there too. It is all very well to laugh at some of the extraordinary and elaborate proposals with which the right hon. Gentleman has found it necessary to fence about his policy of a statutory Parliament in Ireland; but it is a serious matter, from another point of view, for if the Bill could by any possibility become law, I believe that its first effect would be to drive enterprize and capital directly out of Ireland. I do not wish to trouble the House by reading a long extract; but I have a passage here from a Memorial presented at the beginning of this year to the late Prime Minister by a deputation, which came over from Ireland, and was composed of the most eminent merchants and traders of all political Parties in the Provinces of Ireland. And what do they say? They say—

> "The political agitation for the last few years has done serious injury to Irish commerce; but, notwithstanding that agitation, such has been the confidence of Irish mercantile men in the practical wisdom of British legislators, that few have admitted to their minds a belief in the possibility that any proposal for the separation of the Irish from the British Legislature would be countenanced by responsible statesmen. Recent political rumours, however, have given a rude shock to public opinion, and the result has been a paralysis of enterprise, a rapid fall in the price of securities, and worse than a fall in prices, such an absence of buyers as has obliged railway and other public Companies to suspend operations involving the outlay of capital, rather than attempt to issue stocks, or raise funds in such a condition of the market. For the time being the fall in prices has been arrested by a prevailing belief that the rumours will not be followed by action; but, should these hopes prove false, financial distrust will be intensified, and will result in panic and disaster. There seems to be an idea in some quarters in England that the granting of limited legislative powers to an Irish Representative Assembly will produce contentment and confidence. It seems to us idle to suppose that the surrender of power, under such circumstances as those which now exist in Ireland, will produce any such effect, or lead to a change in the objects of the agitation or to an improvement in the character of the representation of the people. On the contrary, it is our full conviction that existing political and social evils will be aggravated, and that the mercantile community will lose all confidence in the future. They will feel that their property will be at the mercy of persons willing to conciliate the masses by financial schemes for their enrichment at the expense of property. Every effort will be made by capitalists to withdraw their money from Ireland, the most energetic and industrious of our people will remove, with whatever property may be left to them, to other countries, where they may hope to receive that protection from the laws which hitherto they have relied on the Imperial Parliament to secure to them at home; and that portion of the people of Ireland—fully one-third of the whole—who are now strongly attached to the British connection, supporters of the Constitution and loyal subjects of the Queen, will feel themselves betrayed, and deserted by those from whom they are entitled to receive support and protection."

Now, Sir, there is no doubt that if such men as those who form the minority and who presented that Memorial to the late Prime Minister were to withdraw from Ireland with their capital it would strike a very heavy blow at the prosperity and credit of the country, and would, if it be so poor as the Prime Minister has told us this evening, render Ireland bankrupt in its resources and bankrupt in its credit. I remember, when the Franchise Bill was passing through this House at the end of 1884, I made an appeal as strongly as I could to the Prime Minister and to the House deprecating the changes that were being made. I ventured to predict what I thought was likely to happen, and I am sorry to say my prediction has turned out to be only too true. That, however, is not what I want to say. I want to call attention to the reply which the Prime Minister gave me on that occasion. He said—

> "No laws can be passed in this House under Irish influence adverse to the loyal minority in Ireland, except by the consent of the Representatives of England and Scotland."—(3 *Hansard*, [288] 608.)

A little later he went on to say—I remember the scene very well, because the right hon Gentleman was very enegetic on the occasion—

> "I am not a flatterer of Gentlemen in that quarter of the House (pointing to the Home Rule Benches). [*Laughter.*] When have I flattered them? There (pointing to Mr. Plunket) is the flatterer of those Gentlemen. The man who flatters them is the man who says that, in a House of 550 Members for Great Britain, 70 or 80 for Ireland are going to give them the law."—(*Ibid.* 609.)

Well, Sir, the 70 or 80 Members from Ireland have given the Prime Minister the law; but I trust they are not going to be allowed to give it to the House of Commons. How has the Prime Minister given that protection? Why, by banishing the loyal minority to the Parliament of Dublin where they will be away from the protection of this

House, and by handing them over to these very 86 Members against whom the Prime Minister was formerly so valiant. The Prime Minister refused in the beginning to deal with disorder in Ireland by overcoming it; and he has now, on the other hand, bargained with the Separatist Party to give them this Repeal Parliament in Dublin as a means of enforcing the law in Ireland. This is the real state of the case—because the present Government are not prepared to meet obstruction in this House, and grapple with lawlessness in Ireland, they propose to pass the very measure which has been denounced by every statesman who has devoted his labour and his life to the interest of Ireland as the most fatal measure that can be proposed, both in the interests of Ireland and of the Empire. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) shows that there are still statesmen in this House, even in the ranks of the Liberal Party, who, in the language of the right hon. Gentleman, will never until they have strained their energies to the utmost give their consent to the proposal for the adoption of this kind of Home Rule. Speaking for myself as a member of the unfortunate Party in Ireland described as "the minority," I place our case and fortunes with confidence in the hands of the Members of this House of Commons, believing thoroughly in their honour and their justice, and trusting that they will not abandon their friends in Ireland.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." – (*Mr. J. Chamberlain.*)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby): As it seems to be the general desire of the House that this debate shall be continued to-morrow, I beg to give Notice that at half-past 4 o'clock to-morrow the Prime Minister will move that the Rule regarding the first Order of the Day for going into Committee of Ways and Means, be suspended. That will enable this debate to be resumed to-morrow.

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *To morrow.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

INTERNATIONAL AND COLONIAL COPYRIGHT BILL.—[Bill 156.]

(*Mr. Acland, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to move the second reading of this Bill; but at this late hour of the evening I do not propose to do more than ask the House to listen to a few remarks as to the general object of the Bill, which I hope will not be without interest. The Bill is intended to give protection to literary property. A larger measure on the subject will be introduced before long; but it is proposed to hold another International Copyright Convention in September of this year, and it is desirable that Her Majesty shall be empowered until then to enter into the International Copyright Union. I believe the late Government intimated their intention that we should enter it, and the present Government have also done so. It is with that view that this Bill is introduced into the House—namely, with the object of carrying out the provisions of the International Copyright Convention. I do not think, Sir, that I need go at any length into the provisions of the Bill, because they are so complicated that it would be difficult to do so without occupying the attention of the House too long, and because they are really more applicable for discussion in Committee. I would just call the attention of the House to some important provisions. There is a point connected with Her Majesty's other Possessions in Clauses 8 and 9 on which I must say a word or two, because it is a matter of public interest. It arises in regard to whether Her Majesty shall enter into the International Copyright Union only on behalf of Great Britain, or also on behalf of the other Dominions of the Crown. It is thought that it will be well for the Empire at large if we were to enter for the Colonies and India as well as for Great Britain; but, on the other hand, we thought that we could not do this without the sanction of the Colonies; and accordingly it is provided that Her Majesty shall be empowered by Order in Council to include any British Possession, but that this shall not be done without the assent of the Colonies. Therefore, it will be in the choice of the Colony interested whether Her Majesty shall enter the Union for them or not. Another very desirable provision has been introduced. It was found necessary to deal with the question of copyright between this country and the Colonies and the Colonies themselves. The House is aware that a British author publishing his work first in England has a copyright over the whole Empire; but there is unhappily in this matter no reciprocity, and a work published in one of the Colonies or India has been only copyright for that Colony or for India, as the case may be. There is no copyright elsewhere, and thereby a Colonial author suffers great injustice. In other words, we in England have secured our own interests, but we have neglected those of the Colonial author; and, therefore, this Bill provides for the establishment of an Imperial Copyright for the whole British Dominions, and the effect will be that an author first publishing in one of the Colonies or India will have the same rights as the British author now possesses. We have some reason to believe that the Colonies will be glad to accept the measure; but, at the same time, we must endeavour not to go behind Colonial wishes, we must endeavour to meet the wishes of the Colonists themselves; and, therefore, we propose not to proceed with the clauses which relate to the Colonies, or, at any rate, we will not carry them through both Houses of Parliament without first of all ascertaining the wishes of the Colonists and India. We feel that, whatever our own views may be, it would not be right for this Parliament to deal with the question themselves; and we propose, therefore, to await the wishes of the Colonies. If we find that they accept the Bill, we will pass it as it now stands; but if any of them object and desire the continuance of the existing state of things, no alteration will be made as far as they are concerned. These, in general terms, are the provisions of the Bill, and at this stage I do not think I need say any more. I hope that the House will appreciate the necessity for pressing the Bill forward, so as to enable Her Majesty to enter into this Copyright Convention; and I hope also that they will appreciate the spirit in which it has been introduced, which is to consolidate good feeling between this country and the Colonies.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Bryce.*)

MR. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I would ask the hon. Gentleman who has charge of the Bill to give us a little time to consider it before the second reading. It is rather a complicated Bill, and I want a little time to examine its provisions.

MR. PLUNKET (Dublin University): I am extremely glad that the Government have gone so far as they have done in this Bill; but I sincerely trust that some hope will be held out to us that a larger measure will be introduced.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): The object of this Bill is to enable us to carry out the provisions of the International Copyright Convention of Berne. The Lord Chancellor has under consideration a larger measure upon this subject.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I hope care will be taken to see that arrangements entered into with other countries are understood in the same sense by those other countries as they are by ourselves.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday* next.

DROWNED PERSONS (DISCOVERY AND INTERMENT) BILL.—[BILL 123.]

(*Colonel Hughes, Mr. Boord, Mr. Baggallay, Mr. Norris, Colonel Duncan.*)

CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): I beg to move the addition of the Proviso to Clause 1 which is on the Paper in my name, and which was inadvertently omitted in Committee.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 21, after the words "bank thereof," to add—"Provided, That notice of the finding of any such body or bodies shall be deemed to be duly given, in pursuance of the principal Act, if given to a police constable within the time specified in that Act, and such constable shall forthwith communicate the same to the parish officers mentioned in the said Act."—(*Colonel Hughes.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Bill to be read the third time upon *Wednesday* next.

MOTIONS.

—o—

NATIONAL PROVIDENT INSURANCE.

Select Committee on National Provident Insurance to consist of Sixteen Members:—Committee *nominated* of,—Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE, Viscount GRIMSTON, Mr. WALTER JAMES, Mr. BIDDULPH, Mr. STUART-WORTLEY, Viscount FOLKESTONE, Mr. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Rhondda Vale), Mr. COLERIDGE, Mr. WILLIAM LOWTHER, Mr. FINCH-HATTON, Mr. HEALY, Mr. CAMERON CORBETT, Mr. ARTHUR ACLAND, Mr. HOYLE, Mr. NORTON, and Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, with power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.—(*Sir Herbert Maxwell.*)

CHURCH SITES (COMPULSORY POWERS REPEAL) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Francis Powell, Bill to repeal the provisions of the Church Building Acts relating to the compulsory purchase of sites for churches and burial grounds, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Francis Powell, Mr. John Talbot, and Mr. Addison.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 171.]

House adjourned at a quarter
before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 9th April, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (No. 2) (58); Poor Relief (Ireland) * (66); Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment * (67).

Committee—Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) (28-69).

Committee — Report — Lunacy (Vacating of Seats) * (47); Prison Officers' Superannuation * (61).

Report—Idiots * (65).

BURGH POLICE AND HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

(*The Earl of Elgin.*)

(NO. 28.) COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee read.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee on the said Bill."—(*The Earl of Elgin.*)

THE EARL OF GALLOWAY, in moving—

> "That it is inexpedient that the House should so resolve itself until such time as the measure promised by Her Majesty's Government for the establishment of county government boards has been presented to Parliament, in view of the possible changes that may thus be effected in the administration of the police force in Scotland,"

said, that the object of the Bill was to consolidate the whole of the laws in Scotland relating to burgh police, of which one-tenth were general and nine-tenths were local laws. If there was any intention to alter the constitution of the County Government Boards, it seemed to him there might be a difficulty in regard to the police in passing this Bill before the introduction of one for the purpose to which he had just alluded. He thought it would be a wiser course that the Local Government Board Bill should pass *pari passu* with this Burgh Police Bill. If there was no intention whatsoever on the part of the Government to put the counties under new Authorities, then, of course, his argument fell to the ground. As he had pointed out to their Lordships, on the Motion for the second reading of the Bill, he was of opinion that an attempt should be made to make the police force of Scotland more elastic. The present system of police was somewhat obsolete, and he felt convinced that if they rendered the organization more elastic not only would they increase its efficiency, but they would bring about economy. The force, in his opinion, ought to be more of a general force. He trusted their Lordships would not think from the terms of his Notice that he desired to defeat the Bill. That was far from his desire, and there was, he thought, some reason for his proposal.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Earl of DALHOUSIE) said, he did not think the principle which the noble Earl had set forward was one on which legislation could be conducted at all. His Amendment was quite inopportune at this stage of the Bill; or, if he intended to reject the Bill altogether, it would have been much better to have moved it on the second reading. He asked the noble Earl if it was reasonable to reject a Bill like this, upon which so much labour had been spent, which had been three years before the country, which had been before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, and afterwards before a Select Committee of their Lordships, and to reject it on the ground he had put forward? He believed their Lordships would do well to go into Committee without further delay, and at once set aside the objection of the noble Earl.

Amendment *negatived.*

House in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4, inclusive, *agreed to,* with Amendments.

Clause 5 (Places to which Act shall apply).

LORD BALFOUR, in moving, in page 6, line 10, leave out ("and so long as such local Act remains operative and unrepealed;") and at end of clause add—

("this Act as regards Part V. (Mitigation and Prevention of Disease) shall not apply in burghs or populous places declared to be burghs under the provisions of this Act with a population not exceeding ten thousand, unless and until the same has been adopted by resolution of the commissioners in the same manner as is provided with reference to Parts II., IV., and VI., and as specified in clause 14 hereof,")

said, the object of his Amendment was to enable smaller burghs and populous places to elect whether the provisions of the Bill should apply to them. The measure was divided into several parts, some of them being compulsory on all burghs and populous places, and some only permissive. The latter had to be adopted by resolution, according to the machinery provided in the Bill. The object of his Amendment was to take Part 5 from the compulsory category and place it in the permissive category. The section dealt with certain sanitary matters, and he believed that while public opinion would be in favour of its adoption for large towns and cities, yet its machinery was much too cumbrous for the smaller places, even if it would not produce mischief by bringing about a reaction against sanitary legislation of this kind. He therefore thought that each small town and populous place should be enabled to say whether it would have these provisions forced upon it. This was a part of the Bill which had been very much overlooked in Scotland. He did not believe that the inhabitants of urban communities were at all aware of the great changes which it would introduce in the laws affecting them if this part of the Bill was made compulsory, although he did not see that any harm would accrue if it were rendered permissive.

Amendment *moved,*

In page 6, line 10, leave out ("and so long as such local Act remains operative and unrepealed"); and at end of clause add ("this Act as regards Part V. (Mitigation and Prevention of Disease) shall not apply in burghs or populous places declared to be burghs under the provisions of this Act with a population not exceeding ten thousand, unless and until the same has been adopted by resolution of the commissioners in the same manner as is provided with reference to Parts II., IV., and VI., and as specified in clause 14 hereof." — (*The Lord Balfour.*)

THE EARL OF DALHOUSIE said, he hoped the House would not accept the Amendment. He might say, on behalf of the Government, that this was perhaps the most necessary part of the Bill. As to small places, they were the very worst, from a sanitary point of view, in the whole of Scotland. Ignorance abounded in them, there was no organization, and no one was responsible for seeing sanitary matters properly attended to. It was precisely that the inhabitants of these places might become aware of what was necessary for public health that the measure had been framed.

Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 6 and 7 *agreed to.*

Clause 8 (Boundaries of burghs to which this Act does not apply from its commencement. If not adopted within a year, boundaries to be held to be unascertained).

On the Motion of The Earl of DALHOUSIE, the following sub-section was inserted in line 29, after ("unascertained"):—

("8. Where any such populous place shall have resolved not to adopt this Act, the householders thereof may, as often as they shall think proper thereafter, but not sooner than two years from the date of any preceding meeting held for the purpose of considering whether the Act should be adopted, by such and the like proceedings, again take this Act into consideration, and adopt the same or determine not to adopt the same.")

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 9 to 13 *agreed to.*

Clause 14 (Adoption in burghs wholly administered under local Police Acts).

Lord BALFOUR said, he begged to move an Amendment to empower the inhabitants to appear before the Sheriff and state objections. As the measure stood, the inhabitants had no knowledge of any application that might be made, except through notice published in the newspapers, and he did not see the use of giving them notice unless they had also a *locus standi* to object if they desired.

Amendment *moved*,

In page 11, line 11, after ("notice") insert ("in a newspaper published or circulating in the burgh, which notice shall specify the parts and sections of this Act proposed to be adopted and the portions of local police Acts proposed to be repealed"); in line 17, after ("books") add ("but in the event of any ratepayer or ratepayers lodging with the sheriff clerk objections to such resolution, which they shall be entitled to do within fourteen days of first publication of said advertisement, the sheriff shall hear parties thereon and dispose of said objections, and it shall be competent to appeal his decision to either division of the Court of Session, whose decision shall be final.")—(*The Lord Balfour.*)

The Earl of DALHOUSIE said, he could not accept the Amendment, as it seemed to be altogether wide of the intentions of the Bill.

Lord BALFOUR said, that if the decision to adopt the Act might be come to by the Town Council or representative body by only a majority of one, his desire was that before the Act was fixed for all time upon the inhabitants that they should have the right, under such circumstances, to object. As the Bill was so far-reaching in its provisions, he hoped the matter might still be reconsidered.

The Earl of DALHOUSIE said, they must either trust the representation principle or they must not. If a Town Council, having decided to adopt the Act, were to have its decision overhauled by the inhabitonts it would be an extraordinary view to take.

Lord BALFOUR observed, that in case the inhabitants disapproved of the action of the Town Council, and turned out every member of it, yet, as the Bill stood, the town would remain fettered by its provisions for all time, even though the decision had only been arrived at by a majority of one.

The Marquess of SALISBURY asked if the noble Earl in charge of the Bill would consider the question?

The Earl of DALHOUSIE submitted that the proper course would be to withdraw the Amendment in the meantime.

Lord BALFOUR said, he would accept the suggestion.

Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

Clauses 15 and 16 *agreed to.*

Clause 17 (Contracts, &c., under former Acts to be saved. Saving of private contracts):

On the Motion of The Earl of Dalhousie, Amendment made, in page 12, line 43, by adding as a new paragraph—

("All complaints and prosecutions raised or pending at the passing of this Act at the instance of the Procurator Fiscal shall continue and be followed forth to a conclusion in the same way and with the same jurisdiction, remedies, penalties, and powers as if the Act had not passed.")

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 18 to 74 *agreed to.*

Clause 75 (Power to detach constables to other places).

On the Motion of The Earl of Dalhousie, Amendment made, in page 35, line 4, after ("respectively"), by adding—

("And further, on the requisition or order of the Secretary for Scotland, the head constable of any burgh, or the chief constable of any county, shall have power to supply a certain portion of the police force under his charge for any special or temporary duty or service elsewhere within Scotland, the proportion from any one force not to exceed ten per centum, and the expense to be defrayed by the force requiring the extra police assistance.")

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 76 to 437 *agreed to.*

Clauses 438 to 441 *struck out.*

Clauses 442 and 443 *agreed to.*

Clause 444 *struck out.*

Remaining Clauses *agreed to.*

The Report of the Amendments to be received on *Tuesday* next; and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 69).

ARMY (EDUCATION)—ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGES, SANDHURST AND WOOLWICH—REPORT OF BOARD OF VISITORS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Viscount ENFIELD, in asking the Under Secretary of State for War, Whether the recommendations of the Board of Visitors, in their Report in the year 1885 upon the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, have been or are likely to be carried out? said, that these recommendations had reference to various matters relating to the housing and comfort of the cadets. Both at Woolwich and Sandhurst the Visitors had reported that the accommodation required extension, and that baths and other appliances for the convenience of the students were required. He hoped the attention of the Secretary of State for War would be directed to carrying out the very practical recommendations of this Report.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord SANDHURST) in reply, said, that with reference to some of the matters alluded to in the Report the necessary changes and alterations had been made. At the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, the alterations in the lavatory and dressing rooms would shortly be put in hand; but the Secretary of State had at present no funds in hand to meet the outlay required in the racquet court. He quite admitted the shortness of the accommodation for the cadets; but it would be a costly operation to build a new wing, and the pressure on the funds provided in the Army Estimates was at present so great, that the Secretary of State could not, in the exercise of his discretion, at present order it to be done. He might say that on the first occasion that presented itself the Secretary of State would give his favourable consideration to the carrying out of the whole of the recommendations.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS (REPEAL) (No. 2) BILL.

(*The Lord Sandhurst.*)

(NO. 58.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord SANDHURST), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that he regretted to inflict himself upon the attention of the House a second time, more particularly as this second duty he had to perform was one which in its subject and details was singularly repulsive to all. But while apologizing for asking the indulgence of their Lordships, he might congratulate them, or at least express a hope, that this debate might not be one of a protracted nature. For when they passed in review the history of the action of the community in regard to these Acts, and considered the action of the House of Commons in regard to these Acts, they found that opposition was emphatically pronounced in regard to them some years ago, and that that opposition had gone on increasing in its course and vigour until he might say practical unanimity of opinion as to these Acts was visible. He might almost say that this question had ceased to be a Party one, and he was encouraged in that belief when he looked at the Division List of the Commons of the other day, and found that many prominent Members of the Tory Party voted in favour of Mr. Stansfeld's Motion, which seemed to him to point to this—that some pledges might have been exacted by Conservative constituencies of opposition to these Acts. In the last two years, since June, 1883, the opposition to these Acts had made giant strides, chiefly, he might say without fear of contradiction, owing to the energy and earnestness of the President of the Local Government Board; and whether their Lordships agreed with him or not, they could not but admire the sincerity and persistency with which he had pursued what he believed to be the right course in regard to these Acts. He carried a Motion in the Commons in 1883 against them; the majority was 72. The opponents of these Acts, gaining courage, persevered in their endeavours under that able leadership; and the other day, on a similar Motion being brought forward, the majority was increased from 72 to 114. But by the majority in 1883 the principle of the Acts was virtually doomed, and compulsory examination was done away with, and an alternative scheme, voluntary examination, was proposed, so that women should be kept in hospital till they were cured of their maladies. But this Bill was never read a second time; and, after all, although the principle of the late Acts was disallowed in this Bill, there would have been a power of compulsory detention, and a knowledge of that power in the hands of those who might abuse it, who might use it in an arbitrary if not in an unjust way, was contrary to the idea of the liberty of the subject. There could be no half-measure; either they must have the matter compulsory or voluntary. The original principle of the measure being abrogated, it seemed of no use to keep such a measure on the Statute Book; and if it was not to be carried out energetically in its entirety, it was unfortunate that such a measure should be on the Book merely to be a dead letter. In asking the House to repeal these particular Acts he did not say that the only method of prevention was abolished. He had great hopes and faith that Local Bodies, now so jealous of Government interference, would undertake the duty, which ought to be their first duty, of providing for the morality of their streets and the health of their inhabitants. In undertaking that duty they had the support of the State, and, what they might consider of more importance, the hospital Votes had been left in this year's Estimates. Good works without number were undertaken by philanthropic bodies and individuals. He saw no reason why they should not extend their good offices in that direction. He might be asked what he thought of the Motion he made in regard to the Army, and whether *quâ* the Army he thought that it was advantageous to repeal the Acts. He would say frankly that he did not, as matters stood at present; but he did not think that a departmental opinion should carry an official away, but that he should consider the question as a whole and on the broadest views. Besides this, he was bound to say that, considering the smallness of the number of the Army in proportion to the rest of the community, he did not see how Her Majesty's Government could propose and advance legislation in regard to which the bulk of the community was strongly opposed to them, and which on many grounds presented itself as abhorrent to one's feelings and subversive of one of the first principles of our Constitution, more especially as he believed it was well within the power of those localities where soldiers were quartered, and certainly it was their duty, to endeavour to make such regulations as should provide against the evils they acknowledged, seeing how such localities benefited by the presence of the troops. In fact, these Acts existing only by popular consent, and that consent not only having been withdrawn, but expression having been made of severe condemnation, and the House of Commons having endorsed that condemnation twice, he trusted their Lordships would accede to the Motion he now proposed that this Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Sandhurst.*)

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK said, his belief was that the effect of these Acts upon young women and girls had been of a most beneficial character, many hundreds having been rescued from a miserable existence and restored to their families, when discharged, through the influence of the matrons of the hospitals. He quite agreed, however, that when Acts of Parliament ceased to be operative it was better that they should not remain upon the Statute Book; but he could not help feeling that in many cases the repeal of these Acts would have a most deleterious effect, and would tend largely to increase juvenile prostitution, and to cause misery to those not yet in being. It should not be lost sight of that the clergy and the population of those places where these Acts had been put into force had been strongly in favour of them. It was right that he should say these few words on this subject, because while admitting that the character of the Acts was in itself objectionable, yet he felt that their effect was moral. He quite agreed, however, that in the circumstances of the case it would be absurd to offer any opposition to the second reading of the Bill. In his opinion the Local Authorities ought to be required to maintain some form of lock hospital for the reception of the unfortunate creatures dealt with by the Acts now about to be repealed.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 64.) THIRD READING.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, that he was compelled to postpone the Motion which stood upon the Paper in his name for the third reading of this Bill until Monday next, in consequence of the Bill, as amended, not having been reprinted.

Third Reading *put off* to *Monday* next.

POOR RELIEF (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 66.)

(*The Lord President.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Earl SPENCER), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said: My Lords, I think it was in 1880 that I stood at your Lordships' Table and moved a very similar Bill to that which is now before you. I received that Bill at the hands of a Colleague who was then Chief Secretary for Ireland. To-day it has been my unhappy duty, as it has been that of many of the Colleagues and friends of the late statesman, to follow the coffin which contained his remains through the stately Abbey of Westminster, and to pay the last tribute to one whom we all respected. My Lords, I cannot but say that I feel that in losing Mr. Forster the country has lost a statesman of very high character. He was remarkable from his independence of thought, from his honesty of purpose, from his great love of liberty, and from his endeavours to remove all disabilities from classes in this country and elsewhere. He made his first mark in public life in connection with this distress in Ireland; and in his subsequent career, when he had most difficult—nay, most perilous duties, as it turned out, to discharge, he performed those duties with that courage and unswerving devotion which marked his character in all things. I am sure that your Lordships will join with me in regretting the loss of a statesman so able and so experienced. With reference to the Bill before the House, I may state that its object is to enable outdoor relief to be given in certain districts in Ireland, chiefly in the Western parts of that country. The measure has already passed through the House of Commons. The matter is one that is pressing, and I propose to take the Committee stage on Monday. In conclusion, I beg to move the second reading of this Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord President.*)

THE EARL OF IDDESLEIGH: My Lords, I do not propose to say anything with regard to the Bill; but I do ask leave to say a single word with reference to the earlier part of the noble Earl's remarks. Having had myself the privilege of sitting in the House of Commons for a quarter of a century with Mr. Forster—during the whole period, indeed, of his Parliamentary life—and having had frequent occasion to deal with him, generally as an opponent, sometimes as a friend, I can say with great truth and sincerity that I never knew a man who was more thoroughly honourable, more thoroughly trustworthy, or a man of higher courage or great fairness in dealing with the cases that came before him than Mr. Forster. He was one who acquired and commanded the respect and regard of every Member, I believe, of the House of Commons—certainly of those who had the most experience of his career. It was a very touching sight which I had the privilege to witness to-day; and I am sure that of those large multitudes who were gathered in and around the Abbey there was not one who did not feel that in the man whom we were following to the grave we were losing one of the noblest specimens of Englishmen, devoting themselves to political life for no selfish personal object, but from a desire to promote what they believe to be the good of their country and the welfare of the Empire to which they belong. Of no man more emphatically than of Mr. Forster might it be said that he looked to the Empire more than to any section of it; there was no man who paid greater attention to questions affecting the outlying portion of our great Colonial system. I was anxious to say one word in order that it might not be supposed that those who were politically opposed to Mr. Forster were insensible to the excellence of his character or the high standard which he held up to those who came in contact with him.

EARL COWPER: My Lords, some few years ago I was in close and intimate connection with the illustrious statesman whom we have just lost; and I must, therefore, join in the few words of tribute which have been paid to his memory. When Mr. Forster went to Ireland nobody knows better than I do that he went there with the purest feelings of benevolence and sympathy, and with a wish to remedy the grievances complained of by the inhabitants of that country. I know what pain it cost him to feel that instead of his efforts having been signalized merely by remedial measures and attempts to atone for past injustice, he was compelled, almost from the very first, to ask his Colleagues for measures for the repression of crime. I know well what pain this cost him; but I know, also, the moment that he did see that they were necessary, how vigorously and strenuously he urged those measures, and with what strength he put them in force. It must have been deep pain to him, indeed, to feel that he left the country altogether without conciliating its inhabitants in the way he wished. He must have felt, on the other hand, that he never for one moment lost the respect and admiration of his fellow-countrymen, least of all of those of his adopted county, and of his constituents, who at the time that he was most abused stuck to him staunchly in the closest and most manly manner. It must be a satisfaction to Mr. Forster's relatives and to his friends to feel how very deeply he is regretted by every class in this country. He is mourned by all; and it is felt upon all sides that if he could have recovered his health he would have been of inestimable assistance to us in what are likely to be the very troubled times before us.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN asked, with regard to the Bill, whether the Commissioners proposed by it were to be paid, and, if so, how much?

EARL SPENCER suggested that these matters would be made clear in Committee.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

House adjourned at a quarter past Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 9th April, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Leave*—Government of Ireland [*Second Night*], *debate further adjourned.*

Committee — Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act (1855) Amendment * [152]—R.P.

Committee — *Report* — Copyhold Enfranchisement [26].

Third Reading—Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order * [132]; Bankruptcy (Agricultural Labourers' Wages) * [130], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—DEPORTATION OF PAUPERS FROM SCOTLAND—CASE OF MRS. JANE CARROLL.

MR. DONAL SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, on or about the 16th of March, Mrs. Jane Carroll, or Mrs. Jane M'Kinlay, and her four children, the eldest being nine years old and the youngest two years, were, under a warrant signed by Alexander Osborne, J.P. and Archibald Allan, J.P. of the county Lanark, Scotland, removed from Glasgow to Athlone, and are now chargeable to Athlone Union; whether Mrs. Jane Carroll, or M'Kinlay had only a four months' residence during her infancy in Ireland, having lived all her life in Great Britain; whether, as this woman married an English soldier, who has deserted her, he will suggest to the Secretary of State for War to provide for herself and her children, rather than allow them to be a burden on the local rates in Ireland; and, whether there is any legal means of preventing such deportation; and, if not, whether Her Majesty's Government will take into consideration the expediency of bringing in a Bill to amend the Law relating to the deportation of paupers from Great Britain to Ireland?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that the statements in the Question were a correct representation of the facts. He had no hesitation in saying that it was very hard indeed that the ratepayers of the Athlone Union should have to support this woman and her family under the circumstances described. As to the removal of paupers from England and Scotland to Ireland, the system was, in the opinion of the Irish Local Government Board, extremely unsatisfactory, and had been condemned by a Royal Commission.

THE THAMES CONSERVANCY BOARD —FERRY AT GREENWICH.

MR. ERNEST DENISON (York, N.R., Whitby) asked the honourable

Member for North West Staffordshire, Whether his attention has been called to the opposition offered by the Thames Conservancy Commissioners to the construction of a direct ferry between Greenwich and the Isle of Dogs; and, seeing that the necessity for such a means of communication has been admitted by both Houses of Parliament, and such a work would give occupation to hundreds of the unemployed, whether he is aware that a Company already exists with full powers to carry out this undertaking, and is only deterred from doing so by the obstructive action of the Thames Conservancy; whether such action has been taken in consequence of any communication from the Board of Works; and, whether, having abandoned their own scheme for providing one, they will use their influence with the Conservancy Commissioners to hasten the completion of the work?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. LEVESON GOWER) (Stafford, N.W.), in reply, said, this matter was within the jurisdiction, not of the Office of Works, but of the Metropolitan Board of Works.

ARREARS OF RENT (IRELAND) ACT, 1882—CASE OF MR. TEMPLEMAN, AGENT TO MRS. ARMSTRONG.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. C. E. Templeman, as agent for Mrs. Armstrong, made a joint application by affidavit with John Cullen, of Fungury, in 1882, under the Arrears Act; that the Arrears Court made an order accordingly, discharging Cullen of arrears due by him; that Templeman subsequently sued Cullen, and swore in Court that Cullen owed no arrears, and that he joined Cullen in application to move Court in error; whether the Arrears Court subsequently investigated this case, and found the arrears were due; whether Mr. Templeman is postmaster in Manorhamilton; and, whether he will direct an investigation into Mr. Templeman's conduct in this case with a view to ascertain whether he is a fit person to retain this office?

MR. TOTTENHAM (Winchester): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the Question, perhaps he will kindly say, if it is not a fact that the same Question in substance was put on the 3rd of August last year, when the Attorney General stated that no cause of action was disclosed; and whether the case had not been before the County Court and a decision given in Mr. Templeman's favour?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that a Question on the same subject containing more detail was put by the hon. Member for Cavan on the 3rd of last August, and a reply given by the Attorney General to the effect that there was no reason shown for taking any action against Mr. Templeman; and in this view he understood the present Attorney General concurred.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—CAPTAINS OF MILITIA SERVING AT DEPOTS.

MR. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleshall) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether any permanent appointments will be given to Captains of Militia who are over twenty-four years of age, who are employed with the depôts of the Line, when their services are no longer required at those depôts; whether it would be possible to offer those officers, who are well reported on and recommended, appointments in the "Commissariat and Transport Corps" or "Ordnance Store Department" on the conclusion of their Line service at these depôts, as by recent regulations Militia officers under twenty-four years of age so employed will be eligible for appointments in the Army; and, whether each case will be considered on its merits?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): There are no permanent appointments available for the officers referred to. The present organization of the Commissariat and Transport Corps and of the Ordnance Store Department does not admit of the employment of such officers with those corps.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—THE SCULPTURES IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

MR. ASHTON (Cheshire, Hyde) asked the honourable baronet the Member for the University of London, as a Trustee of the British Museum, If he will confer with his co-trustees as to the desirability of offering the sculptures, now lying practically useless and unseen in the basement of the British Museum, on loan to the Schools of Art and Art Galleries of the Country?

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I will with pleasure confer with my Colleagues on any point which the hon. Member wishes to bring before us. We have long been anxious to induce the Government to grant the funds necessary to build an additional room; at the same time, I cannot quite admit that these sculptures are practically useless and unseen. I ought to add that the Trustees are precluded by Act of Parliament from parting with any specimens which are not duplicates, and that these sculptures, though of great value to the serious student, are, perhaps, not specially adapted for a popular exhibition.

COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—PUPIL TEACHERS.

MR. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland still pay gratuities to teachers who prepare candidates for the office of pupil teachers in district model schools; and, is it a fact that any teachers whose pupils obtained these appointments two years ago have not yet been paid these gratuities; and, if so, when they are to be paid, and what cause can be assigned for the delay?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne) (who replied) said, that the answer to the first paragraph was yes—under certain conditions specified. As to the second part of the Question, he was informed that since the 1st of January, 1884, 67 applications were made, of which 65 were disposed of in due course, and two only remained under investigation.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE MONAGHAN JURY PANEL.

MR. DILLON (Mayo E.) (for Mr. T. M. HEALY) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it the fact that, in a county so preponderatingly Catholic as Monaghan, the common jury panel for the trial of party cases at next Quarter Sessions contains only the names of nine Catholics out of forty-eight, and can he explain how the panel comes to be so constituted?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that they had no means of knowing the religion of the jurors placed on the panel, for which duty the Sheriff was responsible. He was assured, however, that the names were returned by the Sheriff alphabetically according to rule. Any juror summoned out of order might bring the matter before the Court and have the Sheriff fined. As to the particular cases referred to, the Attorney General, in the exercise of his discretion, had determined that the trial should take place at Assizes and not at Sessions.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)— "LLOYD *v.* SHAW."

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) (for Mr. T. M. HEALY) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether they have any power to dismiss Colonel Lloyd's deputy for his connection with the falsification of the records in Lloyd v. Shaw; and, is it intended to bring the papers in the matter under the notice of the Lord Chancellor, with a view to Colonel Lloyd's position as a magistrate being reviewed?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that the Government had no power to dismiss Colonel Lloyd's deputy, and there did not appear to be any reason for bringing Colonel Lloyd's name before the Lord Chancellor.

EMIGRANTS TO THE COLONIES—ASSISTED PASSAGES.

MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he is aware that emigration agents in this Country refuse to give assisted passages to families, any member of which has received parish relief in any form; and, whether he will endeavour to get this practice altered?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): The only Colonies now granting assisted passages to emigrants which insist upon any such conditions as that to which the hon. Member refers are Canada, New South Wales, and Queensland. In the case of New South

Wales such passages are not granted to persons in "habitual receipt of parish relief;" in that of Queensland to those "who have been inmates of workhouses, or who have been in receipt of workhouse relief." The Dominion Government have, since 1884, refused to grant assisted passages to "inmates of workhouses or persons subsisting on workhouse relief." The decision in each case rests, not as the hon. Member seems to think, with emigration agents in this country, but with the Colonies themselves, who are, of course, entitled to prescribe the conditions on which they will vote their own money, and who would naturally, and, as I think, justly, object to any attempt on the part of the Home Government to interfere with those conditions. Certainly, I could not undertake to do what the hon. Member suggests.

SOUTH AFRICA—ZULULAND—USIBEPU.

MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he can state the date of the charter handed to the Chief Usibepu, of Northern Zululand, by Lord (then Sir Garnet) Wolseley, and bearing the Seal of Great Britain, by virtue of which the said Chief Usibepu became a subject of Her Majesty, the date of the attack on Usibepu by the Boers and Usutus; and, whether the Government will give compensation to Mr. Grosvenor Darke, a British subject, who was robbed of all his property by the Boers and Usutus in the above-mentioned attack, and who has sent in particulars of his claims to the Foreign Office?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): No such charter as is implied in the Question was ever handed to the Chief Usibepu by Lord Wolseley, nor has that Chief ever been a British subject. The hon. Member is probably referring to the conditions which were signed by Usibepu as one of the 13 Chiefs between whom Lord Wolseley distributed the Kingdom of Cetewayo. They were dated in 1879, and will be found at page 259 of the Parliamentary Paper, C. 2,482, printed for Parliament in February, 1880. The date of the attack on Usibepu by the Boers and Usutus was June 7, 1884. Mr. Darke's claim for compensation came, in July, 1884, before Lord Derby, who, after going fully into the merits, refused to entertain it. He has since renewed his application to Lord Granville, who, in view of the fact that at the date of the attack in question Usibepu was not a British subject, and that his territory was not under British protection, has declined to re-open the decision of his Predecessor.

POST OFFICE (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—PREPAYMENT OF MESSAGES TO THE CONTINENT.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If it is true that, in sending a telegraphic message to the Continent, no answer can be prepaid for more than thirty words; whether the postal authorities' attention has been called to the manner in which this rule might have been productive of fatal results, as reported by *The Daily News* of the 15th March 1886, in the case of the Bradford patients who were bitten by a rabid dog, and placed under the care of M. Pasteur, when, owing to the limitation of words prepaid, those unfortunate people's lives were jeopardised; and, whether the postal authorities will take steps to increase the number of words which can be prepaid in sending telegraphic messages Abroad?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.), in reply, said, that not only in the case of messages between England and foreign countries, but also in the case of telegrams between two foreign countries, no answer of more than 30 words could be prepaid. The average number of words in telegrams passing between England and the Continent was only 11. The rule was adopted by all European States, and no inconvenience to the public had hitherto arisen.

PUBLIC MEETINGS (IRELAND)—ATTENDANCE OF CIVIL SERVANTS—MR. GEORGE HILL SMITH.

MR. ALEXANDER BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the report of *The Belfast News Letter* of the 31st March be true, which states that Mr. George Hill Smith, District Registrar of the Court of Probate at

Armagh, was at a Tory demonstration at Exeter on the 29th March, and at a previous meeting at Newcastle on Tyne on the 25th March, at both of which he was a platform speaker; whether Mr. George Hill Smith had been previously warned as to his attendance at political meetings, whilst holding an office under the Court of Probate in Ireland; and, whether Mr. George Hill Smith, Armagh, will be included in the Estimates; and, if so, what facilities will be afforded the House for their discussion?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, he was not aware of the exact character of the meeting; but he was informed that it was not a Party gathering. The rule against Civil servants taking part in public affairs applied to those whose entire time was to be devoted to the public service, and Mr. Hill Smith's case did not come within the contemplation of the rule.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER — HOUSE OF COMMONS—SAFETY MATCHES IN THE SMOKING ROOM.

Mr. PYNE (Waterford, W.) asked the honourable Member for North West Staffordshire, If the so-called safety matches supplied in the smoking room are the same as those supplied to other Government Offices; if he is aware that they will light if rubbed on the floor or window; if it is a fact that English made matches will not do so; and, seeing the great danger that may occur from fire by persons carelessly leaving them about, believing in their safety qualities, will he arrange that English ones may be used instead?

A LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. Leveson Gower) (Stafford, N.W.), in reply, said, that the matches used were the Lion and Bryant and May's safety matches, which were also supplied to all the Government Offices. If the House preferred it, the latter only would in future be supplied.

BUILDING SOCIETIES ACT, 1874—ADVANCES ON PROPERTY IN IRELAND BY BUILDING SOCIETIES.

Mr. O'NEILL (Antrim, Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Societies incorporated under the provisions of "The Building Societies Act, 1874," are entitled, as the Law now stands, to make advances to members out of their funds, on the security of a statutory term in Ireland; and, if not, whether the Government is prepared to introduce such an amending Bill as would enable Building Societies to do so?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, this was a question of law, and the Building Societies must be guided by the opinions they might succeed in obtaining from their own legal advisers.

MERCANTILE MARINE—THE EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN SAILORS.

Mr. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to the great and growing increase in the employment of Foreigners as compared with Englishmen in the British Mercantile Marine; and, whether the Government have it in contemplation to take any action in the matter?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside), in reply, said, information on this subject would be found in the Annual Returns of shipping statistics. The proportion of foreign seamen had increased from 4 per cent in 1851 to 16 per cent in 1884. The Government had no power to interfere.

INDIA—THE CINCHONA BARK TRADE.

Mr. LEWIS McIVER (Devon, Torquay) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether, during the last two years, the Government Cinchona plantations on the Nilgiri Hills have been extended by nearly half a million trees; whether it is true that a large amount of private capital has been invested in Cinchona cultivation on the Nilgiri Hills; whether, with regard to the statement contained in the Despatch, 4th April 1871, of the Secretary of State for India—

> "It should be clearly understood that the Government have no intention of embarking permanently in the bark trade. In sending their Cinchona bark to the London market, one object is certainly to repay the cost of introduction and experimental cultivation of the plants, but the principal intention of the Government, in sanctioning this measure, is to act as a pioneer in establishing the reputation of the Indian-grown barks, and not to injure the prospects of private planters, whose success would give the Government very great satisfaction,"

it is true that the Government of India, since that time, have continued and extended their investments in this branch of commerce; and, whether it is the intention of the Indian Government to continue in competition with private nteerprise?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH) (Lancashire, Clitheroe): I can answer my hon. Friend's first three Questions in the affirmative, only reminding him that the Duke of Argyll, in a despatch to the Government of Madras of the same date as that which he quotes, wrote—

> "It is clearly necessary that the Government should retain the plantations in their own hands for the present. The time has not, therefore, arrived for finally deciding upon the question of their retention or eventual sale. As at present informed, however, I incline to the opinion that a portion of the plantations, with the manufactory, should remain permanently under Government superintendence."

Though it has never been the intention of the Indian Government to continue permanently in the bark trade, the time for withdrawing from it has been deferred during scientific investigations on the subject of the production of a cheap febrifuge.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE MILITIA AND YEOMANRY—VACANT COMMISSIONS.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) asked the Secretary of State for War, What number of vacancies there are for Officers in the Militia and Yeomanry, distinguishing between Field Officers, Captains, and Subalterns?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): The vacancies among commissioned officers of the Militia are—for field officers, five; for captains, 113; for subalterns, 445; total, 563. In the Yeomanry the vacant commissions are—field officers, six; captains, 16; subalterns, 73—in all 95; but in some regiments there are supernumeraries—35 in all—so that the real deficiency is only two field officers, four captains, and 54 subalterns—total, 60 officers.

ARMY—EGYPTIAN MEDALS FOR THE ROYAL MARINE BATTALION.

CAPTAIN PRICE (Devonport) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Why the Egyptian medal and bars, 1884 and 1885, have not been issued to the men of the Royal Marine Battalion who served on shore at Suakin from May 1884 to March 1885, nor to those who took part in the Nile Expedition 1884 and 1885, who served in the Guards' Camel Corps, nor to the Naval Brigade?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): The medals and clasps will be ready for issue in about four weeks' time. Many preliminaries have had to be gone through before a complete list could be obtained of all those who are entitled to the decorations, and it is not usual to issue the medals to one portion of Her Majesty's Naval Forces before another. I can assure the hon. and gallant Member that no avoidable delay shall take place.

THE SUGAR REFINERS—DEPUTATION TO THE BOARD OF TRADE.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether the shorthand note which was taken of his interview with the sugar refiners will be transcribed, and printed, and circulated in any papers for the information of the trade and the public?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): The representatives of the Press were present at the interview in question, and gave such a report as they considered necessary; but for the Government to undertake to print and circulate what takes place at a deputation would, I think, prove a dangerous and very costly precedent.

GOLD AND SILVER—HALL-MARKING WATCHES.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is a fact that watch-cases with metal domes are not permitted to be made in the United Kingdom, because such cases cannot be hall-marked, although watches in cases with metal domes are allowed to be imported into this Country from abroad; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will undertake to provide a remedy to the disadvantage thereby inflicted on British workmen, as recommended by the Select Committee on Hall-marking 1878-9, and by Mr. Prideaux, Clerk of the Goldsmith's Company, in his evidence before that Committee, by allowing watch-cases with metal domes to be hall-marked, and by making the hall-marking of watch-cases a voluntary institution.

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): The hon. Member correctly describes in the first part of his Question the existing state of things, which it would be desirable to remedy whenever practicable. In the state of Public Business I cannot hold out much hope of legislation during the present Session on the question of hall-marking. I may add that the Clerk to the Goldsmiths' Company has written to the Board of Trade demurring to the correctness of the interpretation placed by the hon. Member upon the evidence given before the Select Committee by Mr. Prideaux.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—DONEGAL BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

Mr. BERNARD KELLY (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he is aware of the condition of the Donegal Workhouse for the past three years through the action of the Protestant majority of the Board of Guardians of that institution: whether these Guardians, under the Chairmanship of the Orange Grand Master for county Donegal, have systematically excluded Catholics from every official position in the house; whether, when on two occasions a vacancy for schoolmistress arose, they at each time set aside the more eligible Catholic candidate and appointed a Protestant; whether they even refused several appplications for a Catechist to teach their prayers and catechism to the Catholic children; whether this intolerance is practised in a house where ninety per cent. of the inmates and nearly all the children are Catholics; whether the Chief Secretary in the late Liberal Government and the Local Government Board disapproved of this system of workhouse administration; whether the parish priest, the Very Rev. Hugh McFadden, resigned the chaplaincy on account of the persistent refusal of the Protestant majority of the Board to grant their religious rights to the Catholic children; whether, in consequence, the workhouse has been without a Catholic Chaplain for the past three years, ninety per cent. of the inmates without Divine Service in the house on Sundays and holydays, and without the opportunity of practising their religious duties; and, whether the Government will supply a remedy?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The facts of this case have frequently been brought before Parliament, and I am sorry to say that I find the matter remains still in its former state. The action of the Guardians in refusing to appoint Catholic teachers for the children is, of course, to be regretted, and the Local Government Board frequently complained of the fact; but the responsibility lies with the Guardians, and the Local Government Board have no power to cancel their appointments, or to appoint officers over their heads. The Catholic inmates attend Mass at the parish church. The sick are attended by the parish priest.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether any instance has come within his knowledge where a Catholic Board of Guardians refused to appoint a Protestant teacher or a Protestant chaplain?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: No, Sir; I know of no such case.

NAVAL ENGINEER STUDENTS—REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF NAVAL EDUCATION.

Sir THOMAS BRASSEY (Hastings) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If he will lay upon the Table Copies of any recent Reports by the Director of Naval Education on the educational proficiency of the engineer students at Portsmouth and Devonport; and, whether the Admiralty are prepared to appoint head masters of University standing to the schools established at Portsmouth and Devonport for the engineer students, instead of leaving them, as at present, entirely dependent on the schools provided for the instruction of the dockyard apprentices?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): I shall have much pleasure in showing the Report referred to to my hon. Friend; and if, after having read it, he still wishes for its presentation, I shall be happy to consider his request. The re-organization of the system of instruction for engineer students is now under consideration, and I hope to be able to give further information on the subject when Vote 5 of the Navy Estimates is under the consideration of the Committee. I may add, however, that the views of the present Board upon this important question are very much in accord with those of my hon. Friend.

LAW AND JUSTICE (WALES)—WELSH-SPEAKING JUDGES.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in view of the fact that a few only of the litigants in the Courts of Justice in Wales are conversant with the English language, and of the charges of perjury made by Judges Cox and Lloyd, against the Welsh people, he will provide, by Legislation or otherwise, that, in all future appointments of Stipendiary Magistrates and County Court Judges, it shall be an essential condition that the persons appointed shall be thoroughly conversant with the Welsh language; and, that no person shall be allowed to act as Welsh interpreter at any Court of Justice in the Principality who has not passed an examination to test his proficiency in the English and Welsh languages, and received a licence to practise as interpreter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I must remind my hon. Friend that I have no control over County Court Judges, and I have no cognizance of the charges of perjury referred to. I can only say with regard to Stipendiary Magistrates, the appointment of whom rests with the Secretary of State, that in the case of Welsh-speaking districts we think it very important that the gentlemen appointed shall have sufficient acquaintance with the Welsh language. I am not aware that any complaint has been made to the Home Office that the language is not sufficiently understood by these magistrates. The same care is also, I am informed, exercised by Lords Chancellors in the appointment of County Court Judges, and I do not think that any special legislation is necessary to secure this object. With regard to interpreters, it may be presumed that the Judges in the various Courts see that they are properly qualified for their duties. If any case of inefficiency is brought to my notice I will direct inquiry to be made, so far as Stipendiary Courts are concerned.

COPYRIGHT—THE BERNE CONFERENCE.

MR. AGNEW (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he will inform the House what countries were represented at the Berne Conference of September last upon the question of copyright; if all the States represented thereat agreed to the resolutions adopted at the said Conference; and, if the Government of the United States was invited to take part in the proceedings?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): The Papers laid on the Table at the beginning of the present Session show that the following States were represented at the Berne Conference—namely, Germany, Argentine Republic, Belgium, Costa Rica, Spain, United States, France, Great Britain, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Paraguay, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, and Tunis. The final Protocol was signed by all the Delegates, except those of the United States, Belgium, and three of the smaller South American States, who, whilst expressing sympathy with the objects of the Conference, had not received authority to sign. The United States Delegate, however, made a declaration on behalf of his Government to the effect that they were—

> "Kindly disposed in principle to the proposition that the author of a literary or artistic work, whatever be his nationality, and whatever the place of reproduction, should be everywhere protected on the same footing as the citizens and subjects of each nation."

BELGIUM—RECENT DISTURBANCES.

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he has received any report from our Consular or Diplomatic agents in Brussels as to the causes of the late disturbances in the mining districts of Belgium; whether he has received any information from the same source as to the system of royalties, rents, and subsidies upon which the Belgian coal mines are worked, and as to the powers and rules in force for regulating the hours of labour and the wages of the workpeople in the said mines; and, whether he has any objection to lay the said report or reports upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels has sent several Reports describing the recent disturbances in Belgium, and has, in these Reports, adverted to the condition, wages, and temper of the mining population. He has, however, already been instructed to prepare and transmit forthwith a comprehensive Report on the economic and social causes of the disturbances, and to deal in such Report as well with the points raised in the hon. Member's Question as with other points of importance which have been indicated to him. This Report will, when received, be at once presented to Parliament.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—ANTIQUITIES AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, before incurring any expense in providing other accommodation for the antiquities now lying in the cellars of the British Museum, and having regard to the willingness of the authorities at Liverpool, as appearing from a letter from Sir James Picton, to provide accommodation where they could be properly exhibited, he will consider the propriety of offering some of such antiquities to the care of the city of Liverpool?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The letter of Sir James Picton referred to states that it is to be regretted that such valuable historical monuments as the sculptures now lying in the cellars of the British Museum should be utterly useless and unseen. I am informed by the authorities of the British Museum that there is some degree of misapprehension on this point. Many of the sculptures, and those the most attractive, are placed on exhibition, although in indifferent light and much crowded; the portion lying in an altogether badly-lighted room consists of the sepulchral monuments, and I am informed that it would be very injurious to the general interests of the Museum Collection to remove this class of antiquities. There is a room now vacant on the ground floor in which they can be exhibited in a good light, and another room on the upper floor will soon be available for the reception of some of the sculptures in the basement.

PARLIAMENT — GALLERIES OF THIS HOUSE—ACCOMMODATION FOR COLONIAL MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF LEGISLATURES.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, it being an exceptional case, any special arrangements can be made for the accommodation in the galleries of this House of the numerous distinguished Members of the Governments and Legislatures of our Colonies, who are intending to visit London in the course of the spring, in connection with the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, and who may wish to be present at Sittings of this House?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. LEVESON GOWER) (Stafford, N.W.): Having been requested by the Prime Minister to answer this Question, I beg, in the first place, to refer the hon. Member to the answer I recently gave to the hon. Member for North Meath. I may further assure him that I understand that the authorities of the House are sensible of the natural desire of Members of Colonial Legislatures to witness debates, and will do all that in them lies to provide them with seats on application being made for them by their Colonial Agent.

TRADE AND COMMERCE—COMMERCIAL REPORTS OF CONSULS GENERAL AND CONSULS.

MR. LAWRENCE BAKER (Somerset, Frome) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, The number of Secretaries of Legation, and of Consuls, who are expected to make Annual Reports on the Trade and Commerce of the Countries to which they are accredited; the number of the Reports which have been received for the years 1884 and 1885 respectively; and, how many of these Reports have been laid upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): Annual Trade Reports are required to be furnished by 23 Secretaries of Embassy and Legation, and 156 Consuls General and Consuls. Nineteen Secretaries' Reports and 138 Reports from Consular officers, dealing with the Trade of 1884, were received and laid before Parliament in the course of last year; and, in addition to these Reports, 16 Reports from Secretaries, and 16 from Consuls on matters of general interest, were also received and presented. The Reports for 1885 are coming in daily, some have been already published, and the rest will be presented as quickly as possible.

ARMY—CASE OF SERGEANT THOMAS MACKIE, CANTEEN SERGEANT AT FORT GEORGE, N.B.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, with reference to a memorial from Sergeant Thomas Mackie, late manager of the grocer's shop at Fort George, N.B., complaining that by the treatment of certain officers at Fort George, in the year 1883, he has been grievously wronged, and brought to poverty, he can give the memorialist relief?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): I have received the Memorial referred to, but it is not a case in which I can interfere. Thomas Mackie, late Canteen Sergeant at Fort George, brought an action against an officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, involving charges of slander and wrongful dismissal. Judgment was pronounced against Mackie, both by the Sheriff, and, on appeal, by the Court of Session in Scotland, who dismissed the charges, and found that Mackie himself was a debtor to the public on the balance of the canteen accounts.

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—MALICIOUS MISCHIEF—CASE OF WILLIAM STOKES AND WILLIAM MACDONALD, DUTHIL.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been directed to a criminal process for malicious mischief, &c. against William Stokes and William Macdonald, both of the parish of Duthil, tried before the sheriff and a jury at Inverness on Wednesday, 3rd March last; whether the two persons, John Grant and James Fraser, who came forward towards the close of the trial, and stated (after being duly warned of the consequences) that they, and not the accused, were the guilty parties, the jury thereupon acquitting the accused, are to be put on their trial; and, whether for the offence charged against Stokes and Macdonald, or for perjury?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I have repeatedly had occasion to consider the Papers relating to this matter. Evidence against Stokes and Macdonald was given principally by the Rev. Mr. Bain and his family; but very strong evidence was adduced in defence that they were elsewhere at the time, and it is the case that Grant and Fraser came forward and said that they were the persons who had committed the offence. The jury, without leaving the box, unanimously found Stokes and Macdonald not guilty, and I see no reason to doubt that the verdict of the jury was right. After the trial I directed investigation, with the view to deciding whether Grant and Fraser should be put under charge; but the result was that it appeared that if charged they would not confess, and there is no separate evidence to sustain a prosecution against them. I may add that the affair seems to have been a somewhat rough New Year frolic.

NAVY—STATE OF THE NAVY.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been called to a statement published in the newspapers, on the authority of the noble Lord the gallant Member for East Marylebone, and also to an Amendment on Supply standing in his name, to the effect that no fewer than sixty-nine ships figuring in Her Majesty's Navy are only fit to be sold, broken up, or blown up immediately; and, whether the Government will consent to lay upon the Table of the House a Return giving the names of such vessels, and their tonnage in each case; the date at which each ship was launched; the total cost in each case; and the name of the designer of each such ship respectively?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham), in reply, said, his attention had been called to the terms of the noble Lord's Motion. He thought a Return of detailed information on the subject would not be worth the labour its preparation would involve; and therefore he hoped the hon. Member would not press the matter.

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE—BULGARIA.

Mr. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Great Powers have, in consequence of the opposition of the Russian Government to the permanent union of the two provinces, advised the Prince of Bulgaria to accept the Governorship of Roumelia for a period of only five years; whether Prince Alexander has accepted these terms; and, whether the Greek Government have consented to give up their aggressive attitude and to disarm?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): The Great Powers have advised Prince Alexander to accept the arrangement contained in the Protocol recently signed at Constantinople; but Her Majesty's Government have no information as to whether the Prince has agreed to do so. As regards the last part of the Question, I can add nothing to the answer which I gave to a similar Question by the hon. Member on the 1st instant.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—BOARDING-OUT OF PAUPER CHILDREN.

Mr. WILLIAM DAVIES (Pembrokeshire) asked the President of the Local Government Board, What number of Unions in England and Wales are allowed by law to adopt the system of boarding out of the workhouse their pauper children; and, whether, seeing that the inspectors' reports (as appears in the Local Government Blue Books) are almost uniformly favourable to this course, and that the means of education would thereby be brought within reach of such children wherever located, he will issue instructions to boards of guardians urging on them the advisability of adopting the system in the case of all orphan and deserted children under their charge?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Stansfeld) (Halifax): There are 141 Unions in which the Guardians are empowered to board out orphan and deserted children under duly appointed boarding-out committees beyond the limits of the Unions to which the children are chargeable. And the Guardians of all Unions, except those in the Metropolis, are authorized to board out such children within their Unions. We have no reason to doubt that Boards of Guardians generally are aware of the arguments in favour of the boarding-out system; and, as the Local Government Board have recently appointed a lady who has taken an active interest in the adoption of the system to visit the children boarded out, and her Report will be made public, the Guardians will have further means of forming their own judgment on the subject. The Local Government Board do not propose to issue instructions as suggested. I may add that I am personally strongly in favour of this system.

IRELAND—THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST.

Mr. ALEXANDER BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the President of the Queen's College, Belfast, permitted a private ball to be held in the Examination Hall of the College, and if it had the sanction of the College Council; whether preparations and decorations were made for the ball, in which the porters and other officials of the College were employed; whether one of the porters sustained such injuries by a fall on the well waxed floor whilst taking down the decorations, as incapacitated him for some time from his duties; whether the grant to the College can properly be chargeable with the expense of fêtes of this kind; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will take the necessary steps to prevent the College funds, buildings, and officials being employed for other purposes than those specified in its charter?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, the President of the College informed him that, as a matter of fact, there had never been a ball held in the examination hall. When not required for College purposes the use of the hall was granted for concerts and other purposes. Out of College hours the porters and other officials gave their assistance in making preparations and decorations, for which they were paid by the persons who employed them, and no portion of such expense fell on the College funds. Such use of the hall as he had mentioned was not at variance with the practice of the University Colleges of England. The occasion to which the Question of the hon. Member referred was of a private character.

MOTION.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY—ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Standing Order No. 20, appointing the Committee of Supply, to be the First Order on Friday, read.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Yesterday I understood that the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) wished to know what we proposed to do with regard to the debate on the scheme which has been recently laid before the House. I understand that that debate will not be closed to-night, and therefore I propose that we should take it on Monday, with the hope that it may be brought to a close on that evening. If it were not, some inconvenience to the House might possibly result. Then the question arises—What is to be done with the Budget? If it were brought forward on Thursday it would cause the postponement of the statement as to the Irish Land Question, which nobody would desire. I understand that the hon. Member for Birmingham, who has given Notice of an important Motion for Tuesday in connection with free education and voluntary schools—a Motion the discussion of which would occupy the night—is not unwilling that it should stand over. That being so, if he would give up the night of which he is virtually in possession, I do not think that other Members who stand behind him on the Paper would insist on their right, as they would have no chance of coming on if the hon. Member for Birmingham were to proceed with his Motion. We think, therefore, that it would be for the convenience of the House if the Chancellor of the Exchequer should propose the Budget on Tuesday, and in that way we should be able to go on with the statement with regard to the land on Thursday. I do not think that statement would lead to a very lengthened debate, as far as I can judge. If so, the debate should be resumed after the Easter Recess. Great forbearance has been shown by hon. Gentlemen as to asking Questions about the adjournment over the Recess; but that does not imply that they are indifferent on the subject. When we consider the time we have already sat, and the early day when Parliament was summoned and most Members were brought to town, we think there should be a full measure of Easter holidays, according to the practice of the House. One small economy in favour of the holidays we should be disposed to make, if it should be agreeable to the House. The practice has been to sit on Monday in Passion Week, and that we should be disposed to do; it may be necessary. But it has also been the practice to have a Morning Sitting on Tuesday, and to make that Morning Sitting a sort of repetition of Friday's Business by a Motion at the commencement of the Sitting that the House at its rising do adjourn to a certain day, which has the effect of devoting the Sitting to a miscellaneous class of subjects. In these circumstances, the House might not be indisposed to agree to adjourn from that Monday, and the proposal would be to adjourn from that Monday to the Monday following Easter Monday.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman can tell us; but, suppose the debate on the Land Purchase Bill be concluded on Thursday, what further Business will then be taken before the Recess?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: The Business we are most anxious about is, undoubtedly, the Crofters Bill and that which is immediately pending, apart from these questions relating to Ireland. The three questions which would come before us are the Crofters Bill, Supply, and the Railway Rates Bill. I do not think that anything else is likely to be taken; but I could not very well speak positively until next Monday.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars) said, he had a Motion down for Tuesday relating to the inadequate accommodation of the House. He would be quite willing to postpone that Motion, and, indeed, to remove it from the Paper altogether, if the Prime Minister would assent to what he believed to be the almost universal sentiment of the House, and grant a Committee to consider the question of the accommodation of Members. He was perfectly willing that the Government should nominate the Committee, having no desire to do more than to carry out the wishes, so far as he could, of a numerous body of Members who were constantly inconvenienced by the inadequacy of the present arrangements.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman for the statement he has made, and if I had been aware that the point would arise to-night, I would certainly have put myself in a position to give a positive answer; but I am not in a position at this moment to do so, in consequence of not being aware the point would be raised. I will conider the question carefully, and shall be ready to give him an answer on Monday.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Standing Order be suspended."—(*Mr. W. E. Gladstone.*)

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he had the first Motion on the Paper for that day, which related to the Income Tax; but, under the circumstances, he did not intend to proceed with it then. He, however, desired to suggest that the Government might facilitate inquiry by appointing a Committee to consider the subject.

Motion *agreed to.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

[SECOND NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [8th April],

> "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the provision for the future Government of Ireland."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Sir, in interposing at this stage of the debate I have to throw myself upon the indulgence of the House. I have risen not so much for the purpose of entering upon any detailed discussion of the magnificent speech which was delivered by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister last night, as to make an explanation to the House of the causes which led to my recent resignation. I believe that it is the invariable practice of Ministers retiring from a Cabinet to seek the earliest opportunity of explaining their position to the House; and if in my case this explanation has necessarily been delayed, that is owing to circumstances which the House will thoroughly appreciate. I could not, of course, without impropriety—it would have been indecent for me to have done anything to anticipate the explanation of my right hon. Friend or to force his hand; and, accordingly, it is only now that I have the permission of Her Majesty to state publicly the circumstances and the reasons which have led to the course I have taken. If, in doing this, I have to digress a little from the strict course of the debate, I hope that the House will be willing to make allowances for the peculiar circumstances in which I stand. It is now nearly a month since my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) and myself tendered our resignations, and it is nearly a fortnight since they were finally accepted. In the interval, and while our mouths were closed, rumour has been busy with our reputations and motives, and rumour has not always been very truthful, and certainly it has not been very friendly. I find that some persons, whose frame of mind it is very difficult for me to appreciate, seem to take a pleasure in imputing the basest motives for the public actions of men with whom they happen to differ, and suggest that I only joined the Government with a preconceived determination to leave it at the first opportunity. The statement is not only utterly untrue, but it is ridiculous. [Mr. Gladstone: Hear, hear!] I will say to the House that no act of my public life has been so painful as the resignation which I recently tendered to my right hon. Friend. I am told that by taking that step I have wrecked my political prospects and destroyed altogether all hope of future usefulness. Well, Sir, that is a prospect which it is possible for me to contemplate with equanimity; but it is more difficult to reconcile myself to a separation from one whom I have followed and honoured for so many years, and to leave the personal friends and political associates with whom, I believe, I have no other cause of difference whatever. I have found it hard to give up an opportunity which I thought I had in my grasp, to do something to put forward legislation in which I take a great and overwhelming interest. These considerations weighed with me, and I can assure the House that I have found it a more difficult task to leave a Government than to enter one. There is only one other remark which I wish to make by way of preface. I admit, Sir, that if any difference of opinion has arisen between myself and my right hon. Friend, with his unrivalled experience, with his vast knowledge of public affairs, and with his long and tried devotion to the public service, the natural presumption is that he is right and that I am wrong. It is one to which I have yielded my own judgment on many occasions; but in the present instance the issue before us is one of such vital importance, and a mistake, if we make one, is so fatal and so irrevocable that it seems to me to be the duty of every man, however humble, to bring an independent judgment to its consideration; and everything—private feeling, personal friendship, political ambition, and the cherished objects of a public life—all these must be put aside in view of circumstances which are still higher and still more important. Since I have been in public affairs I have called myself, I think not altogether without reason, a Radical. But that title has never prevented me from giving great consideration to Imperial interests. I have cared for the honour and the influence and the integrity of the Empire, and it is because I believe these things are now in danger that I have felt myself called upon to make the greatest sacrifice that any public man can be expected to make. It will be in the recollection of the House that the late Government were defeated on the 26th of January on a Motion which was made by my Friend, Mr. Jesse Collings, and which raised what has sometimes been called the "unauthorized programme," although I never admitted the justice of that description. But it will be admitted that by that Resolution the House did undoubtedly pledge itself generally to the policy with which I happened to be conspicuously identified during the autumn campaign; and, accordingly, when my right hon. Friend, on the 30th of January, did me the honour to invite me to become a Member of the Government, I was able to tell him that I would allow no personal considerations whatever to stand in the way of my giving him any support I could possibly bring to him; but I felt it necessary to add that the reports that were current as to his intentions with regard to Ireland made me somewhat doubtful whether I could possibly be of service. My right hon. Friend was good enough to tell me that he had not up to that day formed any definite plan; that he had only committed himself to inquiry; and that if I joined him I should be perfectly free to judge and to decide upon anything which would be submitted to the Cabinet. My right hon. Friend said that he adhered to his previous public utterances, and all he asked his Colleagues was to join with him in an inquiry and examination as to how far it was or was not practicable to meet the wishes of the great proportion of the Irish people, as expressed by the return of a large majority of Representatives to Parliament to form something in the nature of a Legislative Body sitting in Dublin. My right hon. Friend added that any possible concession in this direction would be accompanied by full and ample guarantees for the security and integrity of the Empire, for the protection of minorities of all classes of the community, and for the protection of the just interests of the Three Kingdoms. I told my right hon. Friend that this was an inquiry of which I approved, and which, indeed, I thought had become indispensable. I told him that I thought the conditions which he had fixed to any possible concession were just, reasonable, and adequate conditions; but I went on to say that I thought it was honest to state that, as far as I was able to make up my mind, or to form any kind of judgment, I did not believe that he would find it possible to conciliate these conditions and limitations with the establishment of a separate and practically independent Parliament in Dublin. My right hon. Friend did not think that that opinion so expressed by me ought to be a bar to my joining his Government. I asked his leave to put my views in writing, and, if the House will permit me, I will read the letter in which I accepted Office. It is as follows:—

"40, Prince's Gardens, S.W.,
"January 30, 1886.

"My dear Mr. Gladstone,

"I have availed myself of the opportunity you have kindly afforded me to consider further your offer of a seat in your Government. I recognize the justice of your view that the question of Ireland is paramount to all others, and must first engage your attention. The statement of your intention to examine whether it is practicable to comply with the wishes of the majority of the Irish people, as testified by the return of 85 Representatives of the Nationalist Party, does not go beyond your previous public declarations, while the conditions which you attach to the possibility of such compliance seem to me adequate, and are also in accordance with your repeated public utterances. But I have already thought it due to you to say that, according to my present judgment, it will not be found possible to conciliate these conditions with the establishment of a National Legislative Body sitting in Dublin; and I have explained my own preference for an attempt to come to terms with the Irish Members on the basis of a more limited scheme of Local Government, coupled with proposals for a settlement of the Land, and perhaps, also, of the Education Question. You have been kind enough, after hearing these opinions, to repeat your request that I should join your Government, and you have explained that, in this case, I shall retain 'unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection' on any scheme that may ultimately be proposed, and that the full consideration of such minor proposals as I have referred to as an alternative to any larger arrangement will not be excluded by you. On the other hand, I have no difficulty in assuring you of my readiness to give an unprejudiced examination to any more extensive proposals that may be made, with an anxious desire that the result may be more favourable than I am at present able to anticipate. In the circumstances, and with the most earnest hope that I may be able in any way to assist you in your difficult work, I beg to accept the offer you have made to submit my name to Her Majesty for a post in the new Government.

"I am, my dear Mr. Gladstone,
"Yours sincerely,
"J. Chamberlain."

Well, Sir, I have been blamed, like my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs, for joining the Government at all; but I think a moment's reflection will show that any accusation of this kind, at all events, based upon my action would be entirely unreasonable. I have never been opposed to Home Rule, as I have explained, and as I have always understood the words, and as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has on many public occasions defined it. The definitions of my right hon. Friend, those which I have accepted, are these—that he has been willing, as I have been willing, to give to Ireland the largest possible extension of local government consistent with the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of Parliament; and, further, my right hon. Friend has always declared he would never offer to Ireland anything in the direction of Home Rule which he was not prepared to offer with an equal hand to Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom. If now, Sir, to my deep regret and with the greatest possible reluctance, I have felt compelled to sever myself from the Government of my right hon. Friend, it is because in my heart and conscience I do not think the scheme which he explained to the House last night does maintain the limitations which he has always declared himself determined to preserve. I confess, if I had refused at this time to join the Government to undertake an inquiry so limited, and under these conditions, then I think there would have been some reason to say that I was animated by a disloyal feeling towards my Leader, or that I was careless of the interests of the Party with which I am connected. Now, Sir, I admit that, in all probability, the misunderstanding was entirely my own fault. I certainly assumed that the inquiry my right hon. Friend spoke of would be undertaken by him in concert with his Colleagues. I imagined that it was intended to proceed with the examination step by step in the Cabinet, and that after full consultation we were all to be called upon to endeavour to build up some scheme which would fulfil the intentions of the Prime Minister. But, as I say, I must have misunderstood my right hon. Friend in this particular, because it was not until the 13th of March that this matter was mentioned for the first time in the Cabinet. It was then brought forward in connection with the scheme for land purchase which had been circulated to Members of the Cabinet the day before. The scheme contained in this paper was certainly to me a very startling proposal, involving the issue of £120,000,000 Consols—

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I must interrupt my right hon. Friend. I beg to observe that the permission which I obtained from Her Majesty on his behalf had no relation whatever to any particulars of any scheme with regard to the sale or purchase of land to be submitted to the House of Commons. I did not ask Her Majesty for any permission for anyone to speak upon a subject on which a final decision of the Cabinet had not been taken, and which had not been publicly explained to Parliament. I may add that any attempt, or any partial attempt, to enter upon supposed particulars of that scheme would lead to radical misunderstanding.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I cannot say, Sir, how much I regret the misunderstanding which has arisen between my right hon. Friend and myself. I need not say to the House that if I had had the slightest conception that my right hon. Friend had intended to limit in the way he now says my explanation to the House, either I would have withheld that explanation altogether until a more fitting opportunity, or that, at least, I would not, in the slightest degree, have gone from any arrangement that had been come to. I am very sorry that I have not with me my correspondence with my right hon. Friend upon this particular point. If it be desirable, at another time I will produce it to the House. What I have to say now is this—that I asked my right hon. Friend to obtain for me permission from Her Majesty to explain the causes which had led to my resignation. Why, Sir, I did not resign upon the scheme of Home Rule alone. I tendered my resignation after this scheme of land purchase had been produced, and in consequence of the production of that scheme of land purchase. How can I explain the reason of my resignation to the House if my hands are tied behind me? But, Sir, I go further than that. My right hon. Friend, in reply to my request that I might have permission to explain the cause of my resignation, wrote to me a letter to the effect that he had obtained the permission of Her Majesty that I might state the reasons—I forget the exact words, but I think he will agree that I am giving the sense—which had led to my resignation "in connection with the scheme for the Government of Ireland." [Mr. Gladstone: Hear, hear!] I thought that that was a doubtful expression. I was afraid that it might mean some kind of limitation. What did I do? I wrote to my right hon. Friend to state to him that I proposed to read to the House of Commons a letter I had written after the Cabinet meeting at which the land scheme was discussed, and in which I stated my reasons for objecting to the land scheme, and my right hon. Friend gave me his permission, and said—"By all means."

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Mr. Speaker, from my right hon. Friend I understood that he, having in his hands the note which I had written to him as to the permission I had obtained from Her Majesty, proposed to read all the letters which he had written in relation to the subject-matter of that note. I replied to my right hon. Friend that in my opinion he was perfectly justified in exercising his own discretion upon that subject. That is perfectly true, and I do not think anything beyond that would be found to have been included in the scope of the note from me to which my right hon. Friend has referred, but which, unfortunately, he has not got with him.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Sir, I certainly have not got the correspondence in my possession; but I could not have conceived that this most painful altercation—difference of opinion—could possibly have arisen. I am sorry to differ from my right hon. Friend. I think his view is mistaken. What I asked his permission to read—I am sure he will find it in my letter—was my letter of March 15, 1886. His permission to me is to read that letter. I beg to ask my right hon. Friend whether he wishes to withdraw that permission now?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I cannot at this moment recollect what letter it was which my right hon. Friend wrote to me on the 15th of March. I have stated, I think, with perfect exactitude the substance of my statement to him.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I must say my right hon. Friend puts me in a most difficult position. I have to decide at a moment's notice, with the greatest respect for my right hon. Friend, what course I shall pursue. I have again to repeat that in the letter which I wrote to my right hon. Friend, I gave him the dates of all the letters and documents which I proposed to read. I proposed to read certain letters of his, and I asked whether he had any objection to my reading them. In his reply he said he thought it was unnecessary and undesirable, and he also objected to my reading another document which I had mentioned. I replied to him that I should certainly be guided by his wishes, and I should content myself with reading my own letters, and should not read anything I received from him. My right hon. Friend says he is not aware of the contents of one of those letters, the most important, the one I described to him in my letters, as dated March 15, and as containing my reasons for my resignation. He says he is not aware of the contents of that letter. I cannot say whether my right hon. Friend thinks I am entitled to read it or not. If my right hon. Friend cannot give me permission to read that letter I shall not press it.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I have stated the full extent of the permission received from Her Majesty by me on behalf of my right hon. Friend. It is not in my power to extend that permission; and I think it would be entirely contrary, alike to principle and precedent, that explanations should be entered into upon this occasion referring to a measure of very great importance about to be introduced to this House by me, but the introduction of which has not been moved.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I shall endeavour, Sir, to guide myself by the wishes of my right hon. Friend. But the House will see that in the circumstances the explanation which I had proposed to offer them must be altogether lame and incomplete. It is impossible that I should ever at any future time, any more than now, justify myself completely to the country or to the House of Commons. I cannot do so when my hon. Friend introduces his Land Bill, because he will tell me then that it is not competent for me to speak on his Home Rule scheme.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: No, no!

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Well, it does not rest entirely with my right hon. Friend, and if he makes no objection the Speaker will call me to Order, and it will be impossible for me, in discussing the land purchase scheme, except by consent of the House, to deal with the question of Home Rule. I was only anxious to refer to the scheme for land purchase—I was not going elaborately into details, but dealing only with those general principles—so far as was absolutely necessary to show to the House what was the nature of my opposition to the combined scheme of my right hon. Friend. I will endeavour to continue what explanation it may still be possible for me to make with regard to that portion of my objection to the policy of my right hon. Friend which refers to his proposals for dealing with the government of Ireland. I understood from my right hon. Friend on the day of which I am speaking that he intended to propose to Parliament the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin with very large powers, and he gave some explanation also of the fiscal relations which would obtain between this Parliament and the English Parliament. It was after this Cabinet meeting, as I have said—it was held on the 13th—that on the 15th I wrote to my right hon. Friend the letter which I had intended to read to the House, and which contained the reasons why I objected to any considerable employment of English credit for the purpose of buying out the Irish landlords, and also why I thought the new authority was one which it would be unwise and inexpedient to trust with the possession of the land so bought, with the collection of the rents, and with the payment to this country of the necessary interest and Sinking Fund. My right hon. Friend, in reply to that letter, told me, without entering into any argument, that he thought my resignation was premature, and that it would be right that I should, at all events, postpone it until he had been able to complete his scheme for local government in Ireland, and had submitted it to the Cabinet. In accordance with his request, therefore, I postponed my resignation until he should be in a position to make his statement, which was on the 26th of March, the next time the Cabinet met. Well, I gathered at that time that as regards the land proposals they were practically and in principle unaltered. But that is a matter on which I do not wish to insist, as I am unable to tell the House what they were originally. It is not really of the slightest consequence whether they were altered or not; but I was going on to say that my right hon. Friend stated at this meeting the general heads of the scheme for the government of Ireland which he expounded so eloquently last night. I took four principal objections to this proposal. I objected to it, in the first instance, because it proposed to terminate the representation of the Irish Members at Westminster. I objected to that because of the consequences which follow upon it. It appeared to me that if the Irish Members were to cease to occupy their seats in this House, that the Irish Parliament to which they are to be relegated must be, ought to be, and would be, in the future if not in the present, co-ordinate and of equal authority.

Then I objected, in the second place, to the proposal which at this time my right hon. Friend made, to renounce all the exercise of the right of Imperial taxation in Ireland, including, of course, Customs and Excise. I objected, in the third place, to the surrender of the appointment of the Judges and of the magistrates. And I objected, in the last place, to the principle under which my right hon. Friend proposed to make the new authority supreme in all matters which were not specially excluded from its competence; whereas I thought the right principle in any such proposal would be to confer upon it authority only in those cases in which the authority was specially and by statute delegated. In these circumstances I again tendered my resignation, and it was accepted the next day. Now the House will see that since I left the Cabinet there has been one very important change in the proposals. The Customs and Excise are now to be collected and levied by an Imperial Authority. Well, Sir, I ought to be pleased; but I confess I am doubtful. I am very glad, of course, that the arguments which I used in the Cabinet had much greater force after I left than they had while I remained. At the same time, however, the concession does not appear to me to have gone far enough. I connected the collection of Customs and Excise with the continued presence of Irish Members in this House; and under the system proposed by my right hon. Friend now you have an anomaly which I cannot help thinking the Irish Members themselves must feel intolerable and degrading. ["No, no!"] They are the sole judges in such a matter. [*Cheers.*] I think hon. Members are cheering me a little too soon. I believe they are the sole judges as to their own sentiments, and not, of course, of what this Imperial Parliament should do. Well, all I can say is that the new proposal seems to me to be inconsistent with what I understood my right hon. Friend laid down as a cardinal principle of our English Constitution—namely, that taxation and representation should go together. [*Opposition cheers.*] Hon. Members opposite seem inclined at the present moment to accept this arrangement; so I judge from their cheers; but all I can say is that the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has again and again in his public speeches stated in the most emphatic way that he would not be satisfied with any Parliament which did not leave the Customs and the Excise, and the right, if necessary, to put a protective duty on Irish industries with the Irish Authorities.

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): I have said frequently, Sir, that I should claim that right for the Irish people; but the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister has certainly in his speech yesterday been enabled to show us that we are getting a very good *quid pro quo* in exchange for giving up this right of collecting the Customs, in the shape of £1,400,000 a-year.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Yes; I was coming to that later on, when I have to consider the price which is being paid for the scheme of Home Rule which is submitted to our consideration. I notice in the scheme as announced to the House last night several other—I will not call them changes, but developments of the scheme with which I was not previously acquainted. For instance, I find that from the Irish Parliament are to be excluded such matters as copyright, matters connected with the currency, coining, probably the Post Office, and then comes the very large question of trade and navigation. Now, I confess I am very anxious to know, and I hope some Member of the Government will explain, exactly what is meant by trade and navigation? Of course, I assume that the Irish authorities in these circumstances will not be enabled to give a bounty for the encouragement of any local industry. I assume—I do not know whether I am right—that such a question as patents will be altogether excluded from their competence. I assume that such a question as bankruptcy would also be excluded from their competence. These are matters which require explanation, and what I wish to say at this moment is that if all these things are to be taken out of the Irish Parliament and are to be dealt with by the English Parliament, in which the Irish have no representation at all, I cannot help thinking that they would have a very real and considerable grievance. I think the commercial classes of Ireland, for instance, will complain about the question of bankruptcy. At the present time Ireland and Scotland both have separate

Bankruptcy Laws from the Bankruptcy Laws of England. How on earth will the Irish be satisfied to have their commercial law which is to suit their particular idiosyncracies and requirements dictated to them at Westminster, when they have not one single Representative to express their views in the House of Commons?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby): It will not include bankruptcy.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Then I do not know what you mean by trade. I hope I am not going beyond the limitation which has been imposed on me when I say briefly my objection is not to one portion of the scheme, but to the scheme as a whole. I object to either part of the scheme. I object—I will not say to the proposal of my right hon. Friend, because I do not know what it is—I shall not know until he has explained it in the final form which it has received—but I know this—that whatever it is I shall object if it lays—— [*Ironical Home Rule cheers.*] I must say that the zeal of hon. Members opposite overleaps itself. I am not hostile to the scheme of land purchase. It would not be right of me to state my views on that subject; but I will say at once that I am prepared for a scheme of land purchase. What I was going to say when I was interrupted was that I should object to any scheme which laid on the British taxpayer a tremendous liability, and what I thought to be an excessive risk. Above all, I should object to any scheme that was intended only as a bribe to Irish landlords to induce them to modify their hostility to a scheme of Home Rule, and which did not give evidence of an essential and considerable advantage for Irish tenants, who are a class, the poorer tenants especially, deserving of sympathy and assistance. Then I objected to the new authority proposed to be created, because it was certain to become practically independent. The scheme was one for separation, and not for Home Rule. I objected to the two together, because they seemed to me to combine the maximum of risk and the minimum of advantage, and the utmost possible sacrifice for an object which I did not believe it to be worth our while to strive to attain —I do not wish to be misunderstood— the object, of course, being the creation of a separate statutory Parliament in Dublin. I wanted to have said something more about the land; but I pass over that. Only I will say this—a perfectly general remark also, and applying almost to any scheme of land purchase —that we shall be asked to consider any scheme of land purchase as an inseparable adjunct to a scheme which, in my opinion, practically will place Ireland in the position of Canada. Now, I want to test that illustration of Canada. Canada is loyal and friendly to this country. Ireland, I am sorry to say, at the present time, is not loyal, and cannot be called friendly. But if Canada came to this House and asked for any large use of British credit in order to buy Canadian land, or to carry out public works in Canada, why it would be scouted from one end of the Kingdom to the other. Well, then, how can it possibly be right for us to give to Ireland what we refuse to Canada, when the sole result of the scheme, after all, is that we are going to try and put Ireland in the position in which Canada has been for many years? I said I shall object to any scheme that involves the British taxpayer in excessive risks. Why is the risk of any scheme excessive? I have been myself an advocate of large schemes in England and Scotland, intended, by the use of public money, to turn a small tenant into the proprietor of the land that he tilled. I have not been unwilling to take the risk in such a case. But what I object to is to take a risk for what I believe in a short time will be a foreign country. For an integral part of the United Kingdom I am prepared to take a risk; I am not prepared to take a risk in order to promote what is, in my judgment, a thinly-veiled scheme of separation. The fact is, that the key to the whole situation is the proposal to exclude Irish Members from this House. I do not wonder that that is a proposal which has many attractions both for Liberal and for Conservative Members. The hon. Member for Cork has often shown that he can be in this House a most agreeable Colleague; but I am sure he will not think me offensive if I say that he and his Friends have also shown that they can be very disagreeable at times. He, in one of his speeches, threatened that if his demands were not complied with he would make all legislation impossible.

MR. PARNELL: I never threatened anything of the kind.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I am most glad to accept the denial of the hon. Member; but I can show him the paper in which the words appeared. No doubt, the report is inaccurate.

MR. PARNELL: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will read the passage.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I have not got it with me; but I will send to the hon. Member, if he likes, the passage, the date, and the place where the speech is alleged to have been made. But I do not want to press that, and I readily accept his statement that he never said so. However, whether he said it or not, there are many people who think he would have the power to do something of that kind; and that fact weighs very much with English and Scotch Members in the desire that they, at all events, should be left alone to carry on English and Scotch Business without Irish assistance. I sympathize with that feeling; but I want to point out to the House that you must take the consequence of that. It is quite unreasonable to turn out the Irish Members from this House, and leave them entirely unrepresented in reference to matters in which Irish interests are largely concerned, and which are dealt with by the Imperial Parliament. Just consider it. Already, under the scheme of the Prime Minister, the Customs and the Excise are to be taken from their control; all the Prerogatives of the Crown are to be removed from their competence to deal with, as are also the Army and the Navy, and Foreign and Colonial policy. Are the Irish Members of opinion that the Irish people would be permanently content to be shut out from all part in the Imperial policy of this country? I was going to quote the hon. Member for Cork again, but also from memory. He will tell me if I am wrong. I think that in one of his speeches he said something to the effect that he would never be satisfied until Ireland took her full place among the nations of the world. That is, I think, a patriotic aspiration; but I would point out that it never can be realized under the scheme of my right hon. Friend. How can Ireland take her place among the nations of the world when her mouth is closed on every International question? Ireland is to have no part in the arrangement of Commercial Treaties, by which her interests may be seriously affected. She will have no part whatever in deciding the policy under which war may break out, in which her sentiment may be strongly engaged on one side or the other, or which may put in serious peril her own coast and her own people. She is to have no part in the control of the Army and Navy of this country. That is extraordinary, because the annals of our Army show that there have been no more illustrious members of that Army than Irishmen; and Irishmen, under this scheme, are to be content to be sent to battle and to death for matters which Irish Representatives are to have no voice in discussing or determining. I say that Ireland, under these circumstances, is asked to occupy a position of degradation; and I venture to predict that, whatever hon. Members may now do in order to obtain this instalment of their demands, their own countrymen will never rest satisfied with such an inadequate concession. Again, Ireland is to pay a fixed contribution to the Army and Navy, in which she is to have no part; but that contribution is not to be increased if England gets into difficulty, or into war. It may be that in the most terrible crisis of the fate of the Empire Ireland is expected to be indifferent and unaffected, contributing not one single penny in order to secure the safety of the State or the Realm of which she is supposed to form a part. Where, in all this, is the integrity of the Empire? There is another point that I had almost omitted, but which, I think, will be interesting to hon. Members opposite. My right hon. Friend raised a smile when he imagined himself in the position of an Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer proposing an Irish Budget; and certainly I think that my right hon. Friend would never have a more difficult task to perform than if he had to propose and recommend the first Budget presented to the new Irish Parliament. I do not wonder that the hon. Member for Cork complained, from his point of view, of this part of the scheme. I do not wonder that he asks the Prime Minister to be more liberal to him, and tells him that unless he is more liberal the cheerful acceptance of his scheme which he has asked for and made a condition in putting it forward will be denied to him. I say he has good reason to be alarmed. But before I consider the position of the Irish taxpayer I wish to consider for a moment the position of the English taxpayer. In this scheme we shall have given independence. We shall continue to burden our own taxpayer with a large contribution in aid of the Irish Government. In the first place, the contribution which Ireland now makes towards the Imperial Expenditure is to be reduced from one in 12½ to one in 15. I think that my right hon. Friend has changed the estimate since I was in the Cabinet. No doubt, he had good reasons for it. But I want to point out that, in any case, the result of this reduction is that the difference must be made up by imposing increased taxation on the British taxpayer. Then you have to face this—that if Ireland's contribution is reduced from one in 12½ to one in 15, whatever balance is required must come out of additional taxation. But that is not all. We are to continue, as I understand, to pay a contribution of £500,000 a-year for the Irish Constabulary. The hon. Member for Cork says that that is not enough, and that it ought to be much more. Then, if I followed my right hon. Friend correctly, we are also indirectly, in connection with the Customs and Excise, to pay to Ireland that nice little sum of £1,400,000, which has reconciled the hon. Member for Cork to the exclusion of the Customs and Excise from the work of the Irish Parliament. But will this privilege of levying Customs and Excise in Ireland reconcile the English taxpayer to finding this further sum of £1,400,000? We have also to find £500,000 for the Irish Constabulary, and that makes a charge altogether of £1,900,000 a-year, which, capitalized, amounts to £62,700,000, and this is a sum which we are asked to offer to Ireland together with this scheme of local government. But some will also object to this proposal on behalf of the Irish taxpayer, because it is the peculiarity of this scheme that it will be bad for both parties. In the first place, the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to tell his constituents and the Irish House of Commons that he has to appropriate £3,250,000 annually as the fixed quota of Ireland towards the payment of a debt, any obligation in regard to which Ireland has never recognized, and for the Army and Navy, in the control of which Ireland will have no part. He will have to make this statement year by year, and sooner or later, I think, his constituents will lead him a very evil life. But that is not all. It is said that the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer will, according to the scheme of my right hon. Friend, have an annual surplus of £400,000; but I would like to point out on what very slight foundations it rests. I believe the Civil Charges of Ireland at present amount to £4,730,000. Deducting from that the Constabulary and Police contributions of £1,000,000 and £500,000 respectively leaves the Civil Charge £3,200,000. But my right hon. Friend, in his imaginary Budget, estimated the Civil Charges at £2,510,000.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) was understood to say that the cost of collection of Revenue was included.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Oh! the cost of collection was added separately, then I understand it. I think my right hon. Friend spoke about the importance of establishing economy in Irish Expenditure, and I thought he had estimated the economy of a considerable sum. Then, the observation I was going to make upon that point will not apply; and, therefore, so far as the Expenditure goes, as set forth in the Budget which my right hon. Friend laid before us last night, there is nothing to object to. But as regards the Revenue, the hon. Member for Cork has already pointed out that £6,000,000 out of the £8,000,000 depend on the Excise and Customs, and that a very large part of the £6,000,000 is raised from duty on spirits and tobacco. If, therefore, there be any reduction in the consumption, either in England or Ireland, of spirits, it will be followed at once by a large reduction in the receipts of the Irish Exchequer. But that is not all. I am told—I do not know whether hon. Members opposite will agree to it—that to some extent the trade of Ireland in spirits and porter is threatened by competition from Scotland and elsewhere. Well, of course, if anything occurred to lessen the production of spirits in Ireland and to increase the production in England or Scotland, the loss would fall entirely upon the Irish Exchequer. Under these circumstances, what would the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer have to do? He would have to do one of two things—either to levy further taxation, or to repudiate the obligations imposed by this Magna Charta of Ireland. Well, Sir, I thought the statement of the hon. Member for Cork on this subject was rather ominous. He did not express, by any means, hearty approval of this part of the scheme. He did not give it a cheerful acceptance. If, then, we do not consent to make this further contribution and to lay a further obligation upon the British taxpayer, the scheme will only be accepted grudgingly; and you may be sure that before two or three years have passed away there will be an attempt to get it revised or altered; and if that attempt is persistent, we know what persistency does in a matter of this kind. Then we are told by the advocates of this proposal that we can enforce the bargain, the statutory provisions, by force. I think there may be difficulties in the employment of force. At any rate, it is a contingency which we do not like to have to contemplate when we are making what we are told the Government hope will be a final settlement. I confess, Sir, that for my part, rather than face an agitation which I foresee would be the certain result of a proposal of this kind in the form presented to us, rather than face the irritation between the two countries, the panics which from time to time would prevail, and which would inevitably have the tendency enormously to increase our Army and Navy Establishments—rather than face the distraction of all domestic legislation, which will be consequent upon a foreign policy, complicated as it will be by the existence of Ireland in its new and *quasi*-independent situation—I would vote for separation pure and simple. I would wipe off the obligations which exist between England and Ireland as a bad debt; I would prefer that Ireland should go free altogether from any claim on the part of this country, provided also that we might be free from the enormous responsibility which I believe a sham Union would certainly entail. I think the scheme will come to that in the end, and I would rather face it at once. Before I sit down I should like to try to answer the question which was put by the Prime Minister, and put very forcibly—"What alternative have you got?" I believe this question to be so vital and critical, that I think men are bound, however little authority they may have in such a matter, still to do their best to promote a solution of it. Every man is bound to bring his separate contribution. Although I may say to the Prime Minister, using his own language, that it is not for anyone who is not a responsible Minister to prepare or to propose a plan which only a responsible Government has the information or the authority properly to prepare, yet I will not take refuge behind that precedent. I might say that it certainly would be a most strange doctrine that one should be forbidden to refuse a prescription that one thinks to be dangerous because one has not in his pocket a patent remedy which one believes to be a perfect cure. I should think that it would be still stranger that the physician should be called upon to commit suicide if he could not provide an absolute remedy for the disease of his patient. My right hon. Friend appears to be under the impression that the only remedy which the opponents of this scheme would propose is that of coercion carried out in a manner and to an extent never hitherto contemplated. Well, at all events, that is not my alternative. I do not believe it is the only alternative. But before I come to that I think it is only fair that I should ask the advocates of this scheme—"How do you propose to carry out this scheme without coercion, and how, if it be adopted, do you propose to maintain its provisions without force?" Sir, it is the difficulty, one of the great difficulties of this problem that Ireland is not a homogeneous community—that it consists of two nations —["No, no!"]—that it is a nation which comprises two races and two religions. ["No, no!"] At least, hon. Members will not deny that. And whatever the Roman Catholics of Ireland may think of this matter, it is certain that the Protestants will believe, rightly or wrongly, that it is injurious to them, and that they will resist it. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I am not pledging my opinion to the statements that have been made that they will resist by force. I know nothing about that. But I say that their opposition is to be reckoned with and counted upon, and that it ought not to be ignored by this House. I have not a word to say against the Roman Catholic population of Ireland; but I certainly might say a good deal in favour of the Protestant population. In Ulster they are prosperous and industrious and enterprizing, and in Ulster they have rivalled the peaceful activity of Glasgow, of Manchester, and of Birmingham. Throughout the three Southern Provinces you find the Protestants scattered here and there in isolated groups and little congregations, and wherever they exist they are the nucleus of industry and enterprize, and the rallying point and centre for all the loyal population. If you are going to carry this scheme in the face of the opposition of one-fifth of the population of Ireland—I believe the proportion is even greater; and if, unhappily, they should feel their interests so much compromised that they resist your decision, how are you to enforce it? Are you going to apply coercion to the loyal and law-abiding population while you taunt us with a desire and intention, which do not in fact exist, to apply it to those who have not always been loyal or law-abiding? I go further, and I ask how are you going to enforce the provisions of your statutory Parliament, with the conditions and the limitations you have imposed? It is perfectly certain that they will be objected to, and be the subject of agitation. You will have Resolutions of this Irish Parliament protesting against them, and in some times of difficulty and danger you may have these Resolutions supported by threats. What are you going to do? You must admit that force is at the bottom of your proposition, and when you come to the foundation there is still coercion, unless, indeed, you mean to tell us you will surrender everything rather than use force; in which case why not surrender everything at once? The peculiarity of your coercion is that you postpone it until it may be difficult, or even impossible, of application. I will, however, give a more practical answer to the question of the Prime Minister than any *tu quoque*, however effective it might be. I do not believe that coercion is the only or the necessary alternative. I say that after the facts which were stated by the Leaders of the late Government, and which were repeated and confirmed last night by the Prime Minister as to the present state of affairs in Ireland, there is, at all events, no case for coercion at present. The number of outrages is comparatively small; there is no great social disorder; there is a certain amount of intimidation, no doubt; but there is no case for coercion. The influence of the hon. Member for Cork, of his Friends, and of the National Land League has been sufficient to prevent people from doing anything in the nature of extended outrage. I hope that that influence which has been so effective will be continued; but I do not rely on that alone. What is the cause that makes a recrudescence of crime possible in Ireland? It is connected with the agrarian situation. There lies the danger. If any discontent should be felt in consequence of a refusal to grant the demands of the Irish people, that discontent may take the form of refusing to pay rent, and then if rent were sought to be recovered by the ordinary legal processes, outrage, violence, and crime would undoubtedly follow. But if we could put this cause out of the way, is there any reason to anticipate that there would be any such crime as would justify or necessitate any resort to repressive measures? My first answer to the Prime Minister, then, is this—I would put this cause out of the way for a time; I would try to continue the truce—it might almost be called the truce of God—happily existent in Ireland now; I would bring in a Bill to stay all evictions for a period of six months, leaving any arrears to be settled in connection with the final settlement; and, as this would be done in the interests of the United Kingdom, I would throw upon the Government of the United Kingdom the duty of lending to those landlords who might have any need of it such a proportion of their rents, as would save them from necessity and privation. I would take from the landlords for a great Imperial purpose their present legal right of process for the recovery of rents, which might possibly amount to £4,000,000 sterling; and I would advance, if necessary, on the security of the land a specified proportion of those rents until the whole matter should have been settled. I would do that without hesitation, as the risk of such a transaction would be infinitesimal as compared with the risks of which we shall hear something later on. I would hope by these means, by putting a stop to the procedure which has been a prime cause of crime and outrage in Ireland—I would hope that we should get a further interval of six months, which could be used for finding a settlement of this question. I admit that it cannot remain altogether unsettled. I would carry on the inquiry which has been begun by the Prime Minister and the Government; but I would no longer have it carried on by a single individual, however colossal his intelligence may be. I would not have it carried on by a single Party, however important, however influential it may be in this House—I would strive to carry it on with the assent and co-operation of all Parties in the House. I would have it carried on by a Committee or Commission which would represent all the sections of this House—both Parties of Englishmen and Scotchmen, and both Parties of Irishmen also. But upon what lines would I seek such a settlement? I hope the House does not think that I am presuming. I feel there is some presumption in offering an opinion; but I do it only in answer to the demands—the request—which was made by the Prime Minister. In what direction, then, do I think the solution is to be found? It has been assumed in some quarters that I am pedantically devoted to some plan of National Councils, of which a good deal was heard some six months ago. That is an entire mistake. My right hon. Friend will bear me out when I say that I did not think it worth while, in the face of the much greater, much more complete, much more important proposal which he made even to offer one word in favour of National Councils. The notion of National Councils was started to meet a different state of things and a different problem. It was started in connection with a scheme for a thorough Municipal Government in Ireland, and in connection with that I think it was a very good notion. But it has, at the present moment, one fatal defect—if hon. Members opposite were at any time disposed to give it their consideration they are no longer willing to do so; they reject it; and, under those circumstances, Heaven forefend that any English Party or statesman should attempt to impose that benefit upon them. The question now is different. At the time when I myself thought there was something in the idea of a Municipal Council as affording a vent to a great deal of political activity in Ireland, my proposals were considered too extreme by some of my Colleagues who have now been successful in making them too moderate. Those National Councils I, for one, am not likely to put forward again. I no longer regard that scheme as a solution; and I confess—if I may venture with great respect to say so—that I think, after the speech of my right hon. Friend, after the fact that a most important proportion of one of the great Parties in the State has been willing, at all events, to entertain the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman, it is only a very large proposal which can at any future time be accepted as a solution of this vast question. I should look for the solution in the direction of the principle of federation. My right hon. Friend has rather looked for his model to the relations between this country and her self-governing and practically independent Colonies. I think that that is of doubtful expediency. The present connection between our Colonies and ourselves is no doubt very strong, owing to the affection which exists between members of the same nation. But it is a sentimental tie, and a sentimental tie only. It is rather curious that my right hon. Friend should have looked in this direction just at the moment when between the Colonies and this country there is a general desire to draw tighter the bonds which unite us and to bring the whole Empire into one federation. I can hardly bring myself to believe that the hon. Member for Cork looks with entire satisfaction upon a proposal which will substitute such a connection as that which exists between Canada and this country—a connection which, remember, might be broken to-morrow if there were the slightest desire on the part of Canada to terminate it; because no one would think of employing force in order to tie any reluctant self-governing Colony in continued bonds to this country—I think the hon. Member for Cork would hardly like to see a tie of that kind substituted for that which at present exists. At all events, if he would, he would differ from many distinguished Irishmen who have preceded him. I will not quote some of the great orators of a past generation; but I will quote Mr. Butt, who, speaking 10 years ago in this House, said—

> "He, for one, was not willing to give up his share in the power and government of that Empire, and really since the Union he did not see how it was possible to give it up. Since the

Union the wars which had brought Possessions to England had been carried on by the spending of Irish treasure and the shedding of Irish blood. India had been won by the British Empire in the same way, and Ireland had acquired with England partnership rights which it would be impossible to distribute, and of which Ireland could only have her share by continuing to be represented in that House."—(3 *Hansard*, [230] 740.)

It may be that Mr. Butt's views are rather antiquated at this time; but I would refer to an opinion of a distinguished Member of the Party opposite—I mean the hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton)—who, speaking at Dublin the other day, said—

> "If we do not retain a voice in Imperial affairs and keep part and parcel of the Imperial Parliament, the country will be degraded to the position of a province."

Well, that is what Irish Members are asked to agree to under the scheme of my right hon. Friend. It appears to me that the advantage of a system of federation is that Ireland might under it really remain an integral portion of the Empire. The action of such a scheme is centripetal and not centrifugal, and it is in the direction of federation that the Democratic movement has made most advances in the present century. My right hon. Friend has referred to foreign precedents; but surely they are all against him. He did not refer to United Italy. In Italy different nations, different States, which have had independent existences for centuries, have been welded together. Even where federation has been adopted it has always been in the case of federating States which were previously separate. It has been intended to bring nations together, to lessen the causes of difference, and to unite them more closely in a common union. Take the case of Germany, for instance. Germany has been united upon a system of federation which has brought together nations long separated. Take the great case—the greatest case of all—of the United States of America. Ah, Sir, there you have the greatest Democracy the world has ever seen, and a Democracy which has known how to fight in order to maintain its union. It has fought for, and triumphantly maintained, the Imperial union of the United States; but it has known, also, how to respect all local differences. Yes, Sir; I cannot but remember that in the time of its greatest crisis, when it was in the most terrible moment of its fate, my right hon. Friend counselled the disintegration of the United States.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I did not counsel it.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: My right hon. Friend says he did not counsel it; but he gave the weight of his great name to the statement that the Northern and Southern States had become separate nations. Well, Sir, no one doubted at that time the sincerity of my right hon. Friend, or the purity of his motives. Nobody doubts them now; but everybody will admit—I dare say my right hon. Friend himself would admit—that in that view of the situation in the United States he made a mistake.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Are you certain he is not making a mistake again? Well, Sir, I say that in my view the solution of this question should be sought in some form of federation, which would really maintain the Imperial unity, and which would, at the same time, conciliate the desire for a national local government which is felt so strongly by the constituents of hon. Members opposite. I do not say that we should imitate the great models to which I have referred. Our Constitution and the circumstances of the case are different. I say I believe that it is on this line, and not in the line of our relations with our self-governing Colonies, that it is possible to seek for and find a solution of the difficulty. I have now only to thank the House for the indulgence which it has given to me. I regret that my explanation has been necessarily to some extent incomplete. I have, however, said sufficient to put the House in possession of the main reasons why I have ceased to be a Minister of the Crown. Sir, there are some persons, servile partizans, who disgrace political life, who say that I have been guilty of treachery because I have resigned an Office which I could no longer hold with honour. What would these men have been entitled to say of me if, holding the opinions that I do, which I expressed before joining the Government, and which I have expressed to-day, I had remained on that Bench pretending to serve my country with a lie upon my lips? I do not assume—Heaven knows I do not pretend—to dogmatize on a question of this kind. I do not say that

I am right in the conclusion at which I have arrived; I do not presume to condemn those who honestly differ from me; but of one thing I am certain—that I should have been guilty of an incredible shame and baseness if I had clung to place and Office in support of a policy which in my heart I believe to be injurious to the best interests of Ireland and of Great Britain.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Sir, Irish Members have frequently been taunted in this House, and not, perhaps, always without reason, by Liberal Gentlemen opposite for their base ingratitude to the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister. I have sat in this House for nearly six years, and have been reminded, when we were contending against any system of coercion, that whatever else was to be said on a thousand questions as to the Prime Minister of England he stood a good friend to Ireland; but whatever claim the Prime Minister has or had on my allegiance he never, at least, was in the position of having been my political Leader; and, as far as I am concerned, he has not conferred upon Ireland what he has conferred upon England—namely, 50 years of tried and trusted service as a Minister of the Crown and untold benefits to the Liberal Party. And, therefore, Sir, I, as one of those who have been taunted, have been greatly edified to-night by the spectacle of a Liberal Minister, an ex-Liberal Minister, who has served under the banner of the right hon. Gentleman —his trusted lieutenant I may say, who has been his right-hand man—winning the cheers of the enemies of both. In the attack which the Minister of five years' experience makes on the Minister of 50, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) said that in parting with the Cabinet he had felt most painful emotions. I should have thought, Sir, that to-night was one of the proudest moments of his life, for even he in his vaulting ambition never could have hoped—he, the author of the "Doctrine of Ransom"—to have won the continued plaudits of the Tory Party. The right hon. Member began his statement by reminding us that if he differed from the Government now, and pushed that difference to the extent of splitting a partnership, he had very frequently subordinated his views, yielded his judgment. He said—"I have yielded my judgment on many occasions to that of the Prime Minister." What could these occasions have been? The right hon. Gentleman has only been in Office five years, and these occasions, it appears, were principally concerned with the times when he was a known opponent of coercion in the Cabinet. He yielded his judgment when, according to him, the Prime Minister was oppressing Ireland. Ah, but he will not yield his judgment when the Prime Minister is benefiting Ireland. No; the moment he chooses for the exercise of that independence is the moment of the establishment of what he calls the "Truce of God." I congratulate him on his choice of opportunity. We are charged with ingratitude, and the right hon. Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) taunted the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) for having said how grateful Ireland for many generations would be to the name of Gladstone. But, Sir, our words are but feeble when I look on the words which the ex-Colleague of the Prime Minister used on the subject. The right hon. Gentleman used these words—

> "When the history of our time comes to be written, you know who will be the central figure. Mr. Gladstone will stand before posterity as the greatest man of our time, remarkable not only for his great ability, for his steadfastness of purpose, constructive skill; but more, perhaps, than all these for his personal character, and for the high tone that he has introduced into our political and public life. I sometimes think that great men are like great mountains, and that we do not appreciate their magnitude while we are still close to them."

Yes, Sir; the right hon. Gentleman could not appreciate the Prime Minister while he was still close to him; and so, in order to improve his perspective, he moves below the Gangway. We have been treated by him to-night to a speech of a remarkable kind—a speech portions of which it would not be fit for me to touch upon. We had explanations last night from one ex-Minister (Mr. Trevelyan), who, being more practised in post-Ministerial explanations, got through his speech without indiscretions; and to-night the ex-President of the Local Government Board, although pulled up and not allowed to go very far into one part of his explanation, managed to get out all that the Tories wanted, and I congratulate him on the magnificent talent he displayed in that matter.

Nobody could have failed to admire the manner in which, like the lawyer in a case of breach of promise of marriage, he brought down his documents, labelled and numbered, to suit his own side of the argument. He seemed to have prepared his case *de conviction* against the Prime Minister with marvellous elaboration and care; but, curiously enough, when he branched off a bit and touched on another phase of the question, and made what he called a quotation from a letter of the Premier's, and was asked to produce it, the right hon. Gentleman had left it at home. I do not know if ever I shall rise to the dignity of being a Minister in an Irish Parliament under this new Bill. But if I should happen to have such a position of the kind under my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork, and if I should want, when I am leaving him, to give him a very deadly stab, I will take right good care to imitate as closely as possible the action of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, and turn up the pages of *Hansard* to see how it was done. The right hon. Gentleman wound up his speech by unfolding his plan. I observe that it is a different plan now. He goes in now for a plan of federation as brought in by Mr. Butt. Did he vote for Mr. Butt's proposition when it was brought in? I have here the Division List of the year 1876. Mr. Butt's demand was a very moderate demand; it was a demand only for an inquiry into a scheme of federation. But the name of the right hon. Member is absent from the votes of those who merely wanted to inquire into the scheme. Yet, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman who refused to inquire into that scheme at a time when he was an independent Member thinks now his proposal will be received as an honest, statesmanlike, and genuine plan, when the proposition is made by that Member quitting the Cabinet, and wishing to make an *ex post facto* case in his own defence. I think the scheme of federation just broached by him must have been thought of after that famous 15th of March of which we heard so much; that was the date given by the right hon. Gentleman of his resignation; and I would like to know whether his period of examination and inquiry has lasted merely from that 15th of March? Then as to his land proposals—and here I observe he failed to win the applause of the Tories, and that is the worst of getting applause from your enemies, you never know when they will desert you. Stick to your friends through thick and thin. The right hon. Gentleman states that his plan was a suspension of all evictions for six months. He did not tell us what he would do if the Lords threw it out; and when he could not get from the Tory Party in this House the mere paper issue of a cheer for this portion of his plan to-night, he would expect Imperial currency of the Lords' approval with the Queen's head in the shape of the Royal Assent from the other side of the Lobby. No. Her Majesty's signature would never be given to that, for the Peers would block the way. He would lend to the Irish landlords, and here my Friends on the right—the Tories—cheered once more. Ah! they are so used to that. But, Sir, did the right hon. Gentleman, apparently so distrustful of loans to tenants, hear the reply of the Secretary to the Treasury the other night when he showed that not one penny of remission had been made to tenants—the defaulters were merely the landlords. I say nothing against the scheme of federation. But how long are we to wait for it? Henry II. is dead 700 years, and it is time we were getting something for Ireland. Ireland, in any case, should not have to wait until the Colonies—Victoria, South Africa, Nova Zembla, and Heaven knows where else the British Empire ranges—consent to federate in an Imperial Senate. I want to see something done for Ireland. I want to see it done in my time; and, what is more, with the blessing of God, I want to have a hand in doing it. A house must be built from the foundation; but the right hon. Gentleman puts on the dome before he finds the bricks and mortar. How can you propose to set up a confederate Ireland until you have started some kind of local Legislature? The basis of federation, as I understand it, is the existence of Parliaments, and you federate Parliaments with the assent of the peoples. Can he show us the germ of federation budding anywhere yet? For my part, I can only say that whenever England does enter into a scheme of federation she will find that the men who, as soldiers, never forsook her in battle, or as counsellors in her Cabinets, when she had them, who never betrayed her, that these men and their representatives will not be wanting on that day. Federation—I say nothing against federation. I was in this House as a spectator in 1874, when Mr. Butt made his proposals. I was here again in 1875, and I remember well the speech of the Gentleman who is dead, and whose death I regret—the late Member for Bradford—and how he absolutely riddled the proposal of Mr. Butt. Mr. Forster said, in effect—"You want a Constitution for Ireland; but you have no right to force a paper Constitution upon us. You want Home Rule for Ireland for 5,000,000 of people; but why should you expect that Englishmen should change a Constitution for England which we wish not to change." What answer could we give to that argument? If the Members of the Government of this Empire bring forward a scheme of federation as a serious proposal, and not as a *tu quoque* ex-Ministerial counter-plan, then the people of Ireland will be willing to join the subjects of the Empire in the consideration of the scheme. But what will that involve? I think the right hon. Member for Birmingham has not had time enough, since the 15th of March, to complete his scheme. It will involve a British Ministry and an Imperial Ministry. In which Ministry would the right hon. Gentleman desire to sit? Surely the right hon. Member for Birmingham is not so grasping as to want to sit in both, and I am afraid, after to-night, that it would be hardly likely. Englishmen have at this moment in this Chamber a power over the pulses of an Empire which reaches to the very ends of the earth; and I think it will require graver reasons than the establishment of a Parliament in College Green to make English Members surrender their Imperial rights. Another remark of the right hon. Member for Birmingham is this—that in the scheme, as I gather from the letter which he says he sent to the Prime Minister on this auspicious, or inauspicious, occasion, just as it may turn out for him, he said he was willing to give the Irish people control over the land and over education. How do the Tories like that? If the loyal minority wants protection on any subject under Heaven, it is on the subject of land and the subject of education; and yet, after making the proposition, the right hon. Member for Birmingham was not ashamed—perhaps owing to his close intimacy with the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill—to enrobe himself with the Orange scarf. Perhaps it was not quite Orange—there might be a Birmingham shade in it, to be turned out hereafter. He was not ashamed in this House to try to rouse the no-Popery cry in order to stir up the men in that corner of Ireland to resistance. I ask the Scotch Gentlemen who were present at the deputation of the Presbyterian gentlemen from the North of Ireland the other day whether the *gravamen* of the objections to Home Rule was not the fact that the Catholic Church—the obscurantist Catholic Church, as they would call it—would get the control of education? Is it, therefore, to be expected that the Tory Party and the House of Lords would support these Councils of his, institutions, be it remembered, which we were to get without any guarantee or veto whatever about the protection of the loyal minority on the land or education questions, and without a single safeguard for the appeasement of those alarms amongst that class which I hold to be amply provided for by the scheme of the Prime Minister. As I said before, the right hon. Member for Birmingham did not spend long enough over his scheme; and, perhaps, that is the difference between a Minister of five years' experience and a Minister of 50 years' experience. I venture to think that when the scheme of the Prime Minister comes to be considered as a whole, with the exception of certain financial arrangements—and here I find myself in agreement with the right hon. Member for Birmingham, though I am sorry to be his ally in any way in attacking the Bill—I believe that the scheme will be found to operate, to a very large extent, upon the general body of the Dissenting Protestants in the North of Ireland in the sense of an anodyne; and, for my part, though I dislike certain of the checks and safeguards in the Bill, still, for the sake of the Protestant population of Ireland, I heartily welcome them. Sir, I want to live at peace with my fellow-countrymen; I want to give them all the securities and all the guarantees that man can give, subject to the recognition of the ordinary rights of the vast majority; and I say it solemnly—and I say it in the presence of the majority here—that if in Ireland in the future time I thought there would continue those miserable wranglings, those horrible religious animosities, I would rather see my country perish for ever from the face of the earth. I do not blame the Ulster Members as they are called—I am an Ulster Member myself, elected by two Ulster constituencies, but, being a Nationalist, I suppose I do not count, though the majority of the people in the county I represent are Protestants, I say, and say it freely, I do not blame the Representatives of the Orange Party in the North of Ireland for feeling bitterness, and for the venom which at times they display. I freely admit, and it must be admitted, that there are faults on both sides. Being a Catholic myself, I view the matter in a different light from them; but I believe that the relics of ascendancy keep poisoned the Catholic blood in a number of the counties in the North of Ireland, and that the spirit of dislike between the two classes has been fostered and kept alive with deep malignity, and with the most skilful appliances by the landlord party. That party present these men with Orange halls; they present them with the kind of literature that favours this dislike; they are themselves often the heads of the Orange organization. The right hon. Member for Birmingham talked of the prosperity of Ulster as compared with the rest of Ireland; but did he ever look over the Blue Books and examine the history of the Protestant tenants of Ulster under Protestant landlords; and is he aware that so great has been the robbery of the unfortunate tenants of Ulster that the reduction of rents in Ulster has been greater than of any of the other three Provinces; and let me tell him that the people of that Province are grateful accordingly to the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister. I know something of these men—the quiet, decent men that you meet at fair and market, and I know the faith they have in the Prime Minister is extraordinary. They are not Nationalists; but I believe, when these men come to know that this scheme comes to them from the man who gave them the Land Acts of 1870 and 1881, they will not be the men to refuse to reach their hands out to meet him halfway, and to give the scheme a patient and a careful consideration with a view to the adoption of its principles. When I hear the Tory Party in this House talk of Ulster, I tell them that there is not a Province in Ireland where the name of Gladstone is such a name to conjure with as in Ulster. Therefore, I say that the mere fact that the author of this "truce of God," in the words of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, is the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, will make these people more careful how they break it. The right hon. Member for Birmingham has gone into a number of the details of the Government scheme; but, of course, being only in possession of that scheme since yesterday, I am in a much less favourable position to criticize it than is the right hon. Gentleman; but I would like to give the House my view upon the most important objections. The right hon. Gentleman began by saying that this scheme got rid of the supremacy of Parliament. As an Irish Nationalist, I regret to say—because naturally we would like to have the Parliament which Henry Grattan had—that this scheme does not get rid of the supremacy of Parliament, because the moment that the English Parliament finds it necessary to take into review the conduct of the Irish Parliament it can do so, and then the Irish Members revert to their original position in this House. Indeed, I was surprised at the ingenuity of the Prime Minister in the manner in which he guaranteed the maintenance of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. I say this with regret, because of course, naturally, as an Irishman, I would rejoice that England, out of its generosity, had seen its way to give us a larger scheme. But are we going to reject it on that ground? Why, Sir, no person in the position of an Irish Representative can fail to be struck with the enormous gravity of the present position of affairs. For the first time for generations we have in Office a Minister who has a mind large enough and a heart big enough to take into view the condition of an oppressed people across the seas. For the first time for generations Ireland has met a man at the head of affairs in England in whose acts and sympathies they have the fullest confidence. That man may have been tied up and limited in his scheme, and his scheme may be defective accordingly; but the Irish people will say—"No wonder it was defective when he had disloyal Colleagues." And let me say this, and I say it after mature consideration—that the acceptance of this scheme by Ireland—a scheme limited in many important details—its acceptance by the Irish people, not only at home, but by the Irish people abroad, has been smoothed by the revolt of the right hon. Member for Birmingham. Because what the Irish people will consider is this—and you will not find a more keen people anywhere—they will see that one strong man battles for her against a crowd of enemies, and against enormous odds. They would see what he has to suffer for Ireland, and their hearts will be touched by the knowledge that in the past it was by Colleagues like the right hon. Member for Birmingham Ireland and he have too long been kept separated. I never used the language of adulation to any man in this House. I attacked the Prime Minister when I thought he was wrong. I attacked his system of legislation with regard to the land as incomplete and imperfect, and I attacked him in the matter of coercion; but am I to be told, when I see a man breasting the full tide of opposition which his proposal for the benefit of Ireland has created, that our hearts are not to be drawn out in sympathy towards him? It would have been very easy for the Prime Minister to win applause in crushing down still further an impoverished and helpless and enslaved people. It would be very easy for him to take sides with the strong against the oppressed. It would be very easy for him to win the applause of the London *Times;* but he has chosen the better part. In the words of Scripture I may say—"I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me." He has found Ireland in affliction; he has reached out a hand towards her; and I say that, regarding his scheme—faulty and imperfect though it is in some of its details—that the historic memory of the circumstances connected with its introduction will brand itself upon the souls of Irishmen. I say it will leave a permanent impression, and I could go to the most extreme council of the most extreme organization of extreme Irishmen at home or abroad, and by recounting the statement of facts that bear upon this proposal gain their cordial assent to it. Therefore, Sir, while we shall do our part to see that every claim of Ireland shall be honourably and independently brought before the House—while we shall urge every consideration that is possible to remove the blemishes from the Bill, were we to join with our enemies in opposing the scheme, I say we would be making ourselves *participes criminis* in the continuance of an international vendetta; and I say the future history of Ireland, the future history of England, would never cease to condemn us. The right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) has quoted what he called the assassination literature of America. Did he never read the assassination literature of England? Do men think that our blood is so cold and our bodies so clay-like that we should not feel the deadly stings and stabs of the poignard Press of England? He who can weep over the miseries of a process server, is it nothing to him to see men daily degraded in the most powerful Press in the universe, and represented in your so-called comic journals as half-Thug, half-chimpanzee? Why, Sir, that assassination literature referred to is fed by the assassination literature of England; and O'Donovan Rossa, whenever he wants a quotation or a couplet, can always find one to his purpose from *The Times* or *Punch.* So long as Irish blood runs alien in America can our exiles forget the shriek of *The Times* "that the Irish were going with a vengeance," and that soon "a belt in Connemara would be as rare as a red Indian in Manhattan." These are things that set the blood of Irishmen afire; and I say, when we find an Englishman ready to rush forward and ready to give us a large measure of our just rights, base indeed were we if we rejected that scheme. [*Irish cheers.*] The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) approves by his cheers of the quotations I denounce, because, I suppose, we deserve no quarter as "mercenary agitators;" but if we are mere mercenary agitators, why does not England bribe us? I never had my hand in England's pocket. I wonder if the services of the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh in the Militia enables him to say the same. Be that as it may, when we are told that we keep up this racial feud for our own selfish purposes and for motives the grossest and the most contemptible, I wonder that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, instead of proposing to lend money to Irish landlords, does not propose to lend it to us. But these are considerations too paltry to be dwelt upon by anyone who knows the sacrifices that many men who sit here have made in the cause. I only wish some of our Tory opponents had suffered as much, in order to be able to appreciate it. Another attack made by the right hon. Member for Birmingham on the scheme was that it did not give us the Customs. I think he made that a ground of complaint, and said that it would add to the liabilities of the English taxpayer. Well, if he thinks so, let him give us the Customs. I deprecate altogether going into this question of finance after 24 hours' notice; but I understand that if we had the Customs in Ireland England would then levy the tax on Irish whisky and tobacco there, and that would come to £1,140,000. The right hon. Member for Birmingham did not say what England was losing at present; but the Prime Minister has demonstrated, under the existing system, that Ireland is a losing concern to England, costing her £7,500,000 to govern. The Prime Minister wants to make Ireland pay what he considers a reasonable proportion to England, and he estimates that sum at £3,000,000. Why, that will all be profit to England, excepting the expenditure which may take place in Ireland on account of the Army and Navy. Yet the finance of the scheme is impugned! The right hon. Member for Birmingham also said we should be reduced to the position of Canada. I am surprised, remembering that he has had a fortnight for consideration, that the right hon. Gentleman has made that statement. Ex-Cabinet Ministers ought to know that Canada pays nothing whatever to the Imperial Exchequer; and therein lies the full distinction between Ireland and Canada in this matter. Irish Members, we are informed, are not to sit at Westminster. That is a matter of considerable interest, and I wish to say a few words upon it. I will regard it first from an Irish point of view. Could we, as a small country, having to pull up the arrear of 700 years of misgovernment, devote ourselves to the proper development of the resources of our country if we had to provide a body of Representatives who would sit for six months in London and for the remaining six months in Dublin? It is absurd; and if we had to provide two bodies of Representatives, the best brain and intellect of the country would naturally seek the Imperial outlet. We should inevitably send the cream here, and keep the skim at home. But if in the future some satisfactory scheme of federation were devised, it may be found desirable for Ireland, if in the meantime, with increased prosperity, the population increases, to enter into such a scheme, and obtain representation in the Imperial Parliament. Looking at the matter from an English point of view, I think the Prime Minister's answer last night was perfect. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chamberlain) has been reading the speeches of Mr. Butt. Did he find in them any reply to the question how to distinguish between Imperial and non-Imperial questions under a scheme of federation? Perhaps some would have the Speaker's powers extended to enable the Chair to decide on the distinction. The Speaker's powers have been growing; they are already very large, and I hope when we leave this House they will be checked—I am speaking generally and without reference to the present occupant of the Chair. Moreover, when we are taunted with becoming degraded by leaving Westminster, I reply how much more degrading would it be to have our right to speak on some question like that of peace or war left in the hands of Mr. Speaker. The right hon. Gentleman quoted the hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton) against the change. I would remind him that there are more Sextons than my hon. and gifted Friend the Member for Sligo, and the speech which the right hon. Gentleman quoted was made by a Conservative English gentleman, Mr. Robert Sexton, who had recently been helped into the Dublin Corporation by the tolerant Catholics of that city. The right hon. Gentleman, however, cannot be expected to know everything about Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman had another objection. He objected to surrender the Judges and magistrates. When did that objection begin? Under any federal scheme I presume they would be controlled by local authority. I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not once put forward an executive administrative scheme which would have given us control over all the Judges and magistrates in the land? [Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: No.] Then I have made the same mistake in the interpretation of the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman as he says he has made in regard to the scheme of the Prime Minister. It is curious how misunderstandings arise. The right hon. Gentleman goes on to object to Ireland being turned into a "foreign" country. The objection comes ill from him, for has not the right hon. Gentleman made the following declaration:—

> "It is a national question as well as a parochial question, and the pacification of Ireland depends, I believe, on the concession to Ireland of the right to govern itself in the matter of purely domestic business."

—The magistrate who fines 20*s.* and costs has nothing to do, in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, with "purely domestic business"—

> "I do not believe that the great majority of Englishmen have any conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule the Sister Country. It is a system as completely centralized and beaurocratic as that by which Russia governs Poland, or that which prevailed in Venice under Austrian rule. An Irishman cannot move a step without being confronted, interfered with, and controlled by an English official appointed by a foreign Government.

Sir, it is greatly to be regretted that when the right hon. Gentleman so carefully was bringing down all his letters to the Prime Minister he did not also provide himself with a revised edition of his own speeches. These are the objections which the right hon. Gentleman made to the scheme of Home Rule; but it is a remarkable thing that the seceders do not agree in dissenting. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) does not agree with the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan); the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs does not agree with the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington); the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale does not agree with the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James); the right hon. and learned Member for Bury does not agree with the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen). What a lovely Cabinet they would make—say to frame a system of Imperial federation. No tie less strong would be sufficient to connect the right hon. Member for Birmingham with the noble Marquess, whom he described as an "arm-chair politician," or with the right hon. Member for Edinburgh, whom he likened to an Egyptian skeleton at the feast. Before these distinguished statesmen took upon themselves to stand between Ireland and her rights, they should put their heads together, because the occasion was worthy of it, and come to the House and say—"We have combined, agreed, and confederated. We cannot agree with the proposal of the Government. This is what we propose," and then give us some concerted plan. Instead of doing this, the right hon. Member for Birmingham gives us a tune in G sharp, while the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale plays in the key of B flat. It is impossible not to admire the scheme of the Prime Minister by reason of the men who differ from him. In a matter of this kind men who have served the Queen in high offices of State, and who remained her Privy Councillors, ought not to treat the Irish nation with levity. Ireland has done you no wrong. You owe her reparation for the wrongs you have inflicted on her. Would it not be pitiable if any statesmen were to allow any paltry personal feeling, any feeling of jealousy, ambition, or rivalry to stand between Ireland and her rights? Yet the only contribution of the right hon. Member for Birmingham towards the settlement of this controversy is an envenomed Party speech, made after deserting the greatest man his country ever produced at a moment when he was engaged in the great work of Pacification; but it will no more find an echo in Ireland than did the attempt of the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) to stir up the fire of religious hatred on his recent visit to Belfast. Englishmen should rise to the level of the occasion, whether they are noble Lords, Privy Councillors, or working-men Members, of whom I am glad to see so many in this House. We are willing to surrender something. Is the surrender to be all on one side? Is it nothing that a proud and ancient people who have struggled against English rule for seven centuries should now be willing after that terrible agony to terminate the awful conflict and shake hands with you across the gulf of centuries? Does that spectacle produce no emotion but one of rancour in the mind of the right hon. Member for Birmingham? Some of his Colleagues have risen to the height of the occasion after far greater sacrifices than any he need make. The right hon. Member for Birmingham has never been attacked as a Coercionist by the Irish Members; he has not had to bear, as Lord Spencer has had to bear, three years of agony in Ireland. Yet now contrast the attitude of both. I decline to go back upon dead and buried controversies; I decline to imitate the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), who might well have remembered that when we were assailing him in this House the man who with noble magnanimity threw around him the shield of protection was the Prime Minister, whom he now deserts. The right hon. Member for Birmingham has admitted the grievances of Ireland, and it would not be unbecoming in him, Democrat as he boasts himself, when the two peoples are willing to come together, to give the blessed work his benediction. I trust his course will not be imitated by his followers. I trust the Prime Minister's scheme will receive an unbiassed and impartial examination. I admit it has been received with extraordinary marks of favour in this House. But the mind of England has to be opened on this question. I remember that Gavan Duffy said many years ago—

> "If Ireland wants to reach the mind of England she must first successfully assault the conscience of some great English statesman."

Let the right hon. Member for Birmingham ask himself whether his mind is in a proper state of receptivity for examining this scheme. Let him ask himself whether he has purged his mind, or whether he is willing to purge it, of dislikes, or piques, or rivalries. Let English Members who have to vote upon the Bill consider gravely how much or how little they know about Ireland, and whether they know anything at all beyond that which is conveyed to them in the leading articles of English newspapers or in the lying and malignant telegrams of Irish correspondents. Let them prepare their minds and put them in a proper frame for considering this question, for it is a solemn one, and involves the peace and the future of two nations long at discord. I trust that this scheme will be received by the English people, as it has been received in this House, in a spirit of prudence and a spirit of inquiry, and that England will address herself to the settlement of the Irish difficulty in a manner worthy of that justice which is an Englishman's boast, and with that fair play which the Englishman professes to admire, so that the two nations may be brought together and for ever continue in the bonds of amity and peace. The Prime Minister has been attacked for bringing in this Bill; but the Irish people regard him as a messenger bearing a message of brotherhood and friendship to them, and their sentiments towards him may be expressed in the words—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

Mr. W. S. ALLEN (Newcastle-under-Lyme) said, that this proposal came before the House and the constituencies as a matter of surprise. It had not been raised at the late Election. On the contrary, the constituencies were then appealed to to give the Prime Minister, if he gained Office, such a majority as would enable him to deal firmly with the hon. Member for Cork and his demands. At meetings of his constituents, he (Mr. Allen) had denounced the noble Lord, the then Member for Woodstock (Lord Randolph Churchill), in the strongest terms. He then spoke of the unholy alliance which subsisted between him and the hon. Member for Cork. What was his position now? He found that there was an alliance existing between the Prime Minister and the hon. Member for Cork, and he said that as a matter of fairness the constituencies of the Three Kingdoms should be consulted on the subject. He had listened to the magnificent speech of the Prime Minister with feelings of intense admiration; but if he had been in the position of an Irish Member he should have listened to that speech with great humiliation and shame. For it seemed that the proposal of the Prime Minister was very much of the nature of a bribe. For he said, in effect—"If you will go away from here and be good, we will give you a separate Parliament." What would be the position of Irish Members under this new scheme? They would be permitted to contribute to the Imperial Treasury, but not allowed to sit in the Imperial Parliament. They would be allowed to enlist in the Army and the Navy, and shed their blood in the battles of the Empire; but they would not be permitted to have a voice in the Imperial Parliament as to what wars should be entered upon, or what Treaties should be made with Foreign Powers. It appeared to him that that was a very unenviable position to occupy. Then there was this annual tribute which was to be paid by Ireland to the United Kingdom. That might be paid for a few years; but depend upon it murmurs would soon be raised, and in the end we should have no means of exacting it except by force. The proposals of the Prime Minister must, in his opinion, end in the entire separation of the two countries. He regretted that, but he saw no halting-place if the proposals of the Prime Minister were once in operation and became law. He did not wish to say anything offensive to the Irish Members; but it must not be forgotten that this matter of Home Rule, as it was called, had been very much supported by the contributions of American sympathizers, who desired, above everything else, the separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom. He (Mr. W. S. Allen) did not think the Prime Minister desired that; but, depend upon it, separation would come. The hon. and learned Member who had just spoken had expressed himself outside that House in favour of a complete separation between Ireland and England; and, this being the case, he (Mr. W. S. Allen) thought that House had a right to ask whether the hon. and learned Member was willing to retract those expressions, and to be satisfied with this scheme; or, whether he intended to make this scheme merely the starting point from which to urge further and more extreme demands? He might be told that the Imperial Parliament would never grant separation to Ireland. But he doubted whether they could rely with confidence upon that. He (Mr. W. S. Allen) had had a seat in that House long enough to be accustomed to the sight of small minorities growing up and being converted into great majorities. If they granted to agitation the Parliament proposed by the Prime Minister, he feared that the result would be that before long there would be renewed agitation, and that this agitation would become greater and greater, until at last total separation would be granted. The Prime Minister was now an old man. He had passed the three score and ten years which the Psalmist had allotted to man. He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman might be spared to them for years yet to come. But he must at the same time say, that if the Prime Minister was spared to his country for a few years, it would not surprise him (Mr. W. S. Allen) if some day he were to come down to the House and propose separation as the best and only effectual means of binding together indissolubly the peoples of England and Ireland. Now, he did not wish to press the Irish Members opposite at all unduly, or to say anything disagreeable to them; but he must say that he did not at all like the system of crime and outrage by which the demand for Home Rule had been more or less supported from Ireland. Nor could he help saying that he deeply regretted that the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), and the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy), as old Leaders of the Irish Party, had never at any time, in the various speeches they had made, denounced the outrages and crimes committed in Ireland, by those who called themselves their followers, in that strong and forcible language which was surely appropriate to the occasion, and which it was well known that those hon. Members had at command when they chose to use it. The hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) had interrupted him in the course of his remarks; perhaps the House would permit him to read an extract from one of the hon. Gentleman's speeches—speeches which were always interesting and frequently amusing. Referring to the shooting of landlords, the hon. Gentleman said—

> "It is an extreme measure, and we cannot recommend it."

And he went on—

> "One of the reasons is that persons who have undertaken to shoot landlords have missed their aim, and shot someone else."

With all respect to the hon. Member, he might have denounced murder in rather stronger terms. He knew he might be told, and told with perfect truth, that murder was far less frequent in Ireland than it had been; but it would not be denied that the terrible system of "Boycotting" prevailed to a greater extent than was generally believed. The truth was that hon. Members who were the Leaders of the Nationalist Party did not come before the House with clean hands on the question of crime and outrage. They had spoken against it, but they had never denounced it in those strong and manly and decided terms which the case required. It might be said that the Irish people pronounced their opinions clearly and unmistakably at the last General Election. He acknowledged that some 85 or 86 Members of the Nationalist Party had been returned to that House; but, if accounts which had been received were true, there was in many places during the late elections in Ireland a system of intimidation—["No!"]—he said, if accounts were true, there was a system of intimidation and coercion exercised which undoubtedly in many constituencies rendered the election by no means free, and by no means a reflex of public opinion. At any rate, Irishmen should have another opportunity at a perfectly free election—an election free as far as possible from all priestly or other control—of declaring their sentiments upon this question. He had been told by many of his Friends with whom he had conversed in the Lobby—"We are tired of coercion, and what have you to offer us except this measure of the Prime Minister?" Well, he was tired of coercion, too; but coercion was one thing, and the prevention of crime was another thing. There was a great deal in a name. If they gave a thing a bad or unpleasant name, it would always, to a certain extent, mislead public opinion. All laws were based upon the principle of coercion. Our laws against murder were based on the principle of preventing a man killing his neighbour; and what was the reason why they required stronger laws in Ireland for the prevention of crime than they did in England and Scotland? It was a very simple one, for it was just this—that in Ireland, unfortunately, the sympathy of the people was with the criminal, while in England and Scotland the sympathy of the people was against the criminal; and, therefore, as a natural sequence, stronger laws for the suppression of crime were required in Ireland than in England and Scotland. He knew the right hon. Gentleman who at present held the position of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant was very strongly opposed to coercion. He had the highest opinion of the talents and ability of the right hon. Gentleman; but, after all, he could not close his eyes to the fact that the right hon. Gentleman had had very little real experience of political life and in the governing of men. The right hon. Gentleman had been connected with the Press. He was a literary man, and of the practical work of government he knew perhaps as little as any man in the House. The plain truth was that, in dealing with Ireland, they were forced to choose between two species of coercion—they must either have the coercion of crime and outrage, or they must have the coercion of just and wise laws, firmly and temperately administered. For his part, he could not conceive any weakness that was more contemptible than that of a statesman shrinking from enforcing laws which were framed to protect the helpless. The Prime Minister would very likely secure for his scheme a second reading. If he did, he would do so by a very small majority, with the certainty that the measure would be rejected in Committee. Of one thing he (Mr. W. S. Allen) was quite certain, and that was that if any other man but the Prime Minister had brought forward in this House such a scheme, it would have been rejected by an overwhelming majority. If the scheme were carried, it would not be carried because it was a wise scheme—not because it was a safe scheme—but simply and solely through the name, and the influence, and the *prestige* of the present Prime Minister. Last night the House presented a striking sight. At the time the right hon. Gentleman delivered his speech, four of the most powerful Members of his late Administration sat behind him. The statesmen seemed to have left the Front Bench, but the placemen had remained. He regretted to say this, but it was a matter of fact. He claimed to be as sound a Radical as any man in that House; but he could unhesitatingly and with a clear conscience vote against the Prime Minister's scheme, because he believed it would be hurtful to Great Britain, absolutely ruinous to Ireland, and would assuredly end, if it was carried, in the entire separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) said, everyone taking part in that debate must be profoundly impressed with the tremendous gravity of the present crisis; and when the Prime Minister, addressing the crowded House of yesterday, found himself without the flower of his chivalry and deserted by those statesmen who had followed his fortunes for many years, a man less bold than he would have trembled and hesitated in introducing a measure that was destined, whether carried through Parliament or rejected—as he (Mr. Johnston) believed it would be—by the House of Commons, to influence malignantly the future prospects of Ireland and cast a shade on the coming years of the British Empire. The Bill foreshadowed by the right hon. Gentleman had gone beyond his (Mr. Johnston's) worst anticipations, and might be called not so much a Bill for establishing a separate Legislature in Ireland as a measure for legalizing the Council of the National League, and and making it the governing power. Not long ago the right hon. Gentleman was asking the country to give him a sufficient majority to enable him to triumph over the Nationalist Party, which he anticipated would come with increased numbers to that House, and now it would seem that he had himself entered into a league with the Leader of that Party, taking him into his counsels, and intrusting him, if the statements made were true, with secret communications that had been denied to Members of the right hon. Gentleman's own Party. He considered the scheme of the Prime Minister an open, unmistakable abandonment of the Union. It went further than O'Connell ever dreamed of in his palmiest days. It was a greater concession than Mr. Butt asked for when he was Leader of the Home Rule Party in the House. It was what leading statesmen in this country up to the present time would look upon as little less than treason to the British Constitution. Members knew what were the aims of the hon. Member for Cork. The hon. Member had never concealed them from sympathetic audiences in Ireland, and still more in America, whence he recruited his treasury. His aims were the disruption of the British Empire and the severance of the last link which bound Ireland to the British Crown. But the hon. Member was wise in his generation, and reserved for sympathetic audiences his impassioned and fiery utterances that induced them to make liberal contributions, whilst in the House he was calm and peaceful. There was a Party behind the hon. Member for Cork and his followers who would be satisfied with nothing less than the establishment of an Irish Republic, of which probably the hon. Member would be the first President—a Party which now removed Her Majesty's name from toast lists and hissed the National Anthem. An historian whose name was recognized as one of the first of his day—Mr. Lecky—in writing to *The Times* of the 13th of January last, had said that the Party who demanded Home Rule for Ireland were desirous of plundering the whole landed property of the country, and were distinguished by their hatred for the English connection in any form. No one could doubt what was the ultimate object of those Americans who were the paymasters of the National League, and if they had any doubt upon the point let them read *United Ireland* for three months—a paper that was the accredited organ of the Irish Nationalist Party, and which was owned by one of their Leaders. Mr. Lecky had said that anyone who had read *United Ireland* for three months, and then proposed to hand the government of the country to the Party whose opinions they represented, must be either a traitor or a fool. He should be sorry to stigmatize the Prime Minister, who doubtless did not read *United Ireland*, as either a traitor or a fool; but he sincerely hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would not strike this great blow at the British Constitution, which would have the effect of crushing the liberties of a large portion of the Irish people, or of giving rise to the other alternative to which he had alluded upon more than one occasion—of resistance to the Acts of this Irish Parliament by the inhabitants of the Province of Ulster at the risk of civil war. [*Home Rule ironical cheers.*] Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway might cheer; they were so accustomed to use "tall talk" themselves that, perhaps, they thought that in this instance he was indulging in similar "bunkum;" but he could assure them that he was speaking in sad and sober earnest. They had heard from the hon. Member for Cork last night a sort of denunciation of *The Irish World;* but he might remind the House that, on a certain occasion not very long ago, that journal published a telegram signed "Charles Stewart Parnell," thanking that journal and its readers for their constant cooperation and support, and telling them to have no fear for ultimate success. That was the journal whose efforts had been the means of obtaining the largest sums for filling the treasury of the National League. [Mr. Harrington: Not a penny.] He hoped that cognizance would be taken of that statement made by the hon. Member below the Gangway, and that those who had contributed £400,000 in aid of the Irish National Party would see the gratitude with which that aid was received. Reference had frequently been made to the Parliament of Ireland as it formerly existed; but hon. Members below the Gangway appeared to have overlooked the fact that Grattan's Parliament was a Protestant Parliament, and up to 1793 the Members returned to it were elected by Protestant electors. It was elected by Protestant electors, who enfranchised their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. It was universally the practice to refer to that Parliament as the great model which should be adopted in the management of the future government of Ireland; but the result of that independent Legislature was that in 1798 there was a rebellion in that country, and the Union, whatever might be said as to the means by which it was brought about, was the natural and necessary result of the resistance of a certain portion of the people of Ireland to the domination of the English Government. There was one event in Irish history of which hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway were proud, and that was the transaction at Vinegar Hill in 1798. He held in his hand an extract from a work describing the battle of Vinegar Hill, at which the rebels were led on by a Father Murphy, who, in haranguing his followers, urged them to crush out heresy and to slay the heretics. And, in his (Mr. Johnston's) opinion, the same cry would soon be raised in Ireland if the Bill now before the House should ever become law. The hon. Member next alluded to *The Freeman's Journal*, from which, according to the sworn evidence of James Carey, he took the first hint for the removal of Lord Frederick Cavendish. Carey belonged to the extreme section of that Party which had been supported from time to time by hon. Members below the Gangway. He held in his hand a pamphlet which set forth that Mr. Biggar, Mr. O'Connor, and other Members of that House were, or had been, Fenians. Mr. Davitt was a Fenian too; but he had a conscience, and he had refused to enter Parliament and swear allegiance. Then, as to the Leader of the Party, he was described as a cool and relentless schemer, whose cause was helped by assassination and outrage.

Mr. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I rise to Order, Sir. I wish to ask if it is competent for an hon. Member to read from an anonymous pamphlet containing reflections upon Members of this House?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is dealing very generally with the whole subject before the House. He is not in Order in continuing to make reflections upon Members of this House, though in the form of quotations from a pamphlet.

Mr. JOHNSTON said, he readily bowed to the Speaker's ruling; but he hoped that the same respect for personal character and personal dignity would always be shown by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. Passing to another subject, he begged to thank the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), if he would allow him, to offer him his tribute of thanks for his generous utterances regarding the Protestants of Ulster. He was proud to be a Representative of Ulster. He was proud to be a Member of a section of that great Protestant town which, as the right hon. Gentleman had truly said, was the rival of Liverpool, of Manchester, and of Glasgow in its manufacturing industries and its commercial prosperity. If hon. Gentlemen who followed the hon. Member for Cork would endeavour to develop the resources of their country instead of agitating from town to town and keeping up a perpetual state of turmoil and trouble in the land, driving, as they did, capital from the shores of their unhappy land, the other three Provinces of Ireland might be as prosperous as Protestant Ulster. But the course of action of the hon. Member for Cork and his Party had resulted in dispelling confidence and in driving away capital from the Irish shores; yet they spoke of restoring to Ireland commercial prosperity and of developing its industrial progress. They also spoke of a Legislature which would establish credit and be able to develop in Ireland its decayed and decaying industries. From time to time many romantic statements had been uttered in that House; but there never was a more Utopian scheme, there never was a greater delusion, than the idea that anyone, or any country, or any capitalist outside the walls of a lunatic asylum, would consent to lend money on the credit of an Irish Parliament. The hon. Member for the Doncaster Division of Yorkshire (Mr. Shirley) thought it right on the previous evening to denounce some statements which had been made from the Opposition side of the House with regard to the attitude that would be taken up by the Protestants of Ulster in the event of a concession being made to the demands of the Party following the hon. Member for Cork and the measure of the Prime Minister becoming the law of the land. He said deliberately that to that Irish Parliament, if it were constituted, not an Ulster Protestant would send a Representative. The dictates of that Irish Parliament would be resisted by the people of Ulster at the point of the bayonet. The behests of that Irish Parliament would be absolutely null and void in the greater portion of the Province of Ulster. ["No, no!"] He spoke those words knowing the men for whom he spoke, having worked with them and having associated with them for years; and he spoke as a member of a loyal, a legal, and a patriotic institution. The Orangemen of Ulster were attached to the Crown and the Constitution of England. In many trying times of Irish history they had been the bulwarks of English government in Ireland. When the abortive rebellion broke out in Ireland in 1848, and terminated in what was known as the Cabbage Garden Rebellion, the Orangemen of Ireland were trusted by Lord Clarendon, the Lord Lieutenant of that day, with arms in order that they might defend the persons and the property of the Protestants from the expected rising of the rebels in Dublin. The Orangemen of Ulster desired, however, to live at peace with their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. They had equal rights and liberties at the present time, and there was no religious inequality to gall or hurt the feelings of anyone. When some years ago he was contending in the House for the repeal of an oppressive Party Processions Act which bore unjustly on the Protestants and which was inoperative with regard to Fenian processions, he did not advocate its repeal on the ground of any principles of ascendency or the right of one party more than another. He did not now recede from those principles; but what they dreaded in Ulster was that if the Utopian scheme of the right hon. Gentleman, by any extraordinary circumstance became the law of the land, the Protestants of Ulster would be dominated and tyrannized over by the majority of that country. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] They had reason to know that when the members of the Roman Catholic Church had dominion in Ireland in olden days it fared badly with the Protestant minority in the South-West of Ireland. ["No, no!"] Did hon. Gentlemen who disputed that statement read history backwards? Were they not aware that in the days of James II. the Protestant minority could not meet together in Dublin? And the right hon. Gentleman in the measure now under consideration desired to remove the Protestantism of the Lord Lieutenant. That one safeguard, which they had looked to for fair play in the government of Ireland, that one link, which bound the government of Ireland to the Crown of England by Protestant ties, was to be done away with, and the Representative of the Queen, who herself must be a Protestant, must cease to occupy that position in Ireland. It was no wonder that the people of Ulster looked with apprehension at the tendency of the legislation of the Prime Minister. He would not accuse hon. Members below the Gangway of insincerity in their utterances in that House when they said that they believed that the Protestants of Ireland would be perfectly safe if that Bill were passed and Ireland had a Parliament of her own; but he did not think that those hon. Members knew the tendency of the system to which they belonged. [*A laugh.*] If any of them doubted the accuracy of his statements he should be glad if they would move for a Committee to inquire into the truth of them. The Church of Rome in Ireland at the present moment did not hesitate to proclaim that she looked for coming triumph and victory for her cause to an Irish Parliament. He felt that in this crisis in his country's history it would not be right that he should hesitate for one moment to raise his protest against this measure. He should not like to be reproached for having hesitated to lay in the plainest and strongest terms before the people and Parliament of England the dangers which they in Ulster feared and the evils against which they protested. Some hon. Gentlemen had already left the side of the Prime Minister since this matter was under discussion. He expected that every day when they came down to the House they would find some new removal from the Front Bench to the seats below the Gangway. *The Times* had been vituperated by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway; but he had, on behalf of the Protestants of Ulster, to thank that great organ of public opinion for its noble vindication of the principles of Imperial unity and the integrity of the Empire. *The Times* had freely and fairly discussed that question, and given to all parties an opportunity of advocating their views, and laying them before the country at that crisis. In that newspaper Sir James Stephen had said that he should regard civil war as a smaller calamity than the dismemberment of the Empire. But the Protestants of Ireland did not contemplate civil war with a light conscience, or in a careless mood; they looked upon it as a last resort in defence of the unity and integrity of the Empire to which they were proud to belong; but they trusted to the wisdom of Parliament to relieve them from that great calamity, and to uphold the integrity of the Empire. As he saw the noble Marquess the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington) in his place, he would venture to read to the House one or two extracts from his recent speeches. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] He trusted that the hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway would give them an indication of that fair play which they asserted would be shown by an Irish Parliament, because if the Ulster Members could not get an opportunity of uttering their views in the British House of Commons, what chance would they have in the one in College Green? The noble Marquess the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire gave wise counsel to the people of Belfast on November 5, 1885, remarking, in the course of his admirable speech—

> "I think that, for our part, we should be willing to waive our differences, for however important they may be as such, they are of minor importance when weighed with the maintenance of the Union."

He, therefore, appealed to the noble Marquess and his Party opposite to join with them on that side in waiving their differences, which were utterly insignificant in comparison with the importance of maintaining the Union. On the same occasion the noble Marquess said that the people of the United Kingdom would never consent to the practical separation of the two Governments of England and Ireland. The noble Marquess would, he hoped, adhere to those opinions at the present grave crisis, and resist the first stage of that measure. In conclusion, he trusted that the Parliament of England would, at that great juncture, remember the traditions of a glorious past; and that while, as had been observed by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, all other countries and Empires were consolidating into one their government and power we should refuse to allow this political dynamite to be introduced into the British Constitution and a fatal blow to be struck at the great British Empire.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) said, that they had all listened with admiration to the great speech in which last night the Prime Minister unfolded his scheme for the future government of Ireland. Nothing, however, it seemed to him (Sir John Lubbock), but his marvellous eloquence, the respect and admiration so justly felt for him by his grateful countrymen could have obtained for such an occasion even a respectful hearing. If it had been brought forward by anyone but the right hon. Gentleman its supporters would have been few indeed. But even if the right hon. Gentleman did succeed in carrying his Bill how would he do so? Only thanks to the support of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and against the wishes of a majority of his own countrymen. Moreover, those who desired to hand down to their children intact the inheritance they had received from their ancestors had surely great reason to complain that that question was not put fully and fairly before the country at the last General Election. There was in the first of the Prime Minister's Mid Lothian speeches a kind of prophetic condemnation of the present scheme. He said—

> "I will now suppose, gentlemen, for argument's sake, that the Liberal Party might be returned to the coming Parliament—this is rather a staggering supposition—I beg you to indulge me for an instant—might be returned to the coming Parliament in a minority, but in a minority which might become a majority by the aid of the Irish vote. And I will suppose that owing to some cause the present Govern-

ment had disappeared and that the Liberal Party was called upon to deal with this great Constitutional question of the government of Ireland in a position where it was only a minority dependent upon the Irish vote for converting into a majority. Now, gentlemen, I tell you seriously and solemnly that although I believe the Liberal Party itself to be honourable, patriotic, sound, and trustworthy, yet in such a position as that it would not be trustworthy. In such a position as that it would not be safe for it to enter upon the consideration of the principles of a measure with respect to which at every step of its progress it would be in the power of a Party coming from Ireland to say—'Unless you do this and unless you do that we turn you out to-morrow.'"

The right hon. Gentleman had said that the experience of other countries gave us every reason to hope that the speculation on which he invited Parliament to embark might be successful. But was this so? He began by referring to Norway and Sweden; but this was not a case in point. He said himself that Norway was absolutely independent, while, in the present scheme, he assured the House that he was not going to repeal the Union. Take Austria-Hungary. Here, again, the same might be said. M. Denombynes, in his great work on the Constitutions of Europe, expressly said—"Since the compromise of 1867 the Austro-Hungarian Empire forms two States." Sir Henry Elliot, who, as our Ambassador at Vienna, had excellent opportunities for judging, in a recent letter to *The Times* had expressed a far from favourable opinion as to the result, and if it worked at all it was greatly due to the large powers possessed by the Emperor. Perhaps a more parallel case was that of Hungary and Croatia, speaking of which Mr. Shaw Lefevre, himself a Home Ruler, was forced in fairness to admit that, though the Constitution was arranged with the most scrupulous desire for fairness, and—

"So framed with respect and care for the national feeling and historic traditions of the people, yet it is a misfortune that difficulties should have been experienced in working it. On this point, it is a warning to those who have to frame the Constitutional changes in Ireland."

Of course, the main aim and object of the right hon. Gentleman was to promote greater harmony between Great Britain and Ireland. Suppose his system had been in operation during the last 50 years, did he think the relations of the two countries would have been any better? What reasons were there for thinking so? Ireland had passed through a period of terrible suffering; but had it been our fault? Did we cause the blight in the potato or the succession of disastrous seasons? This Bill, if passed, might solve one difficult question; but, on the other hand, it would raise many others. The right hon. Gentleman said that he intended to maintain the fiscal union; but he admitted that the duties levied in Ireland on whisky and porter exported to and drunk in England were really paid by the consumer. If we did not erect a Custom House between England and Ireland, what was to prevent the Irish Government themselves establishing a great national distillery or giving a heavy drawback, because whatever they paid with one hand they were to receive back with the other? Our manufacturers might have to compete with rivals who would practically pay no duty. Evidently the result would be that a large part of our Customs and Excise might be appropriated for the benefit of Ireland. This was only a sample of the difficulties that would arise by the establishment of a separate Parliament in Dublin. It was admittedly necessary that there should be reasonable securities for the minority. But was it not also necessary that such securities should be permanent? Why limit them to three years? The real cause of the want of sympathy with the law was rather to be found in the distressed condition of the people than in the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman. There was always a tendency to blame Governments in times of distress. When people were miserable the Government was never popular. Ireland during the last 40 years had suffered more, perhaps, than almost any other people. If the cases had been reversed, if Scotland had suffered and Ireland had prospered, it was his belief that Ireland would have been quiet and Scotland discontented. This was not a question of race. The true Irish might be a race. But where were they? More of them were to be found in New York or Glasgow than in any city of Ireland. The population of Ireland contained no small proportion of Teutons, who constituted the most energetic, prosperous, and leading portion of the community. On the other hand, even without counting recent immigrants, there were in parts of Great Britain, in Western Scotland, in Wales, in Cornwall, and elsewhere, a large and, happily, a loyal Celtic population. This Bill would give a great leverage to disunion. Ireland now contributed 1-13th to Imperial Expenditure; in future her share was to be less than 1-26th, or under one-half. Moreover, she was to contribute nothing whatever towards any of that so-called exceptional expenditure which occurred almost every year. If any war should unfortunately break out, she was to bear no share of the burden; it was all to fall on the unfortunate taxpayers of England and Scotland. If it was wished to encourage disorder and disaffection in other districts, what more could be done than to declare that if the people only proved themselves sufficiently turbulent they would be rewarded by having half their taxes taken off and being relieved from contributing towards any national emergency? Though Britain would suffer by this scheme, Ireland would not gain. Comparing the prices of Irish securities at the beginning of this year with what they were at the middle of last we should find that there had been a general fall of from 5 to 20 per cent. The Four per Cent Debenture Stocks of the best English railways now stood at 120, or even higher, while those of the Irish railways stood at 10 or 15 per cent lower, and this was greatly due to the uneasiness and uncertainty as to the future of Ireland. The present depression of trade generally was, no doubt, due to many causes, but one of them certainly was the uncertainty and insecurity of the political future. The scheme that had been laid before the House by the Prime Minister was both complicated and revolutionary. Nor did it carry out what the right hon. Gentleman described as essential requisites. Among them he particularly mentioned that it would be impossible to force on Ireland taxation without representation, whereas by the scheme Ireland was to be taxed to some extent and yet have no representation; and, secondly, he mentioned the necessity of maintaining "the political equality of the three countries," whereas he reduced Ireland to the position of a mere dependency to Great Britain. By this Bill England and Scotland would create for themselves a crowd of difficulties, and Ireland would herself regret the adoption of this Bill. Finding, as she would, that she could secure in this House everything she could justly and wisely ask, she would herself come to rejoice that she had retained her position as an integral portion of that great Empire in which so many of her sons had played a glorious part.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): Sir, I have no doubt that the House is almost weary of personal explanations, and therefore I shall ask it to listen for only a very few moments to what I have to say at the outset of my observations which may partake of the nature of a personal explanation. It is, I think, no secret that some of my right hon. and hon. Friends and myself were unable at the time of the formation of the present Government to join my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in the arduous task which he has now undertaken. Our conduct at that time was the subject of some comment and some observation, and perhaps I may say, on my own behalf and on that of some of my Friends, one or two words in explanation of the conduct which we then thought it our duty to pursue. That explanation is a very simple one. The communications which passed between my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government and myself were in substance communicated to the whole country a very few days after they took place. My right hon. Friend explained to the country, in his recent address to the electors of Mid Lothian, the basis upon which the present Government was formed. My right hon. Friend stated in his address—

> "That there were at present three great Irish questions demanding our care—social order, the settlement of the land question, and a widely-prevalent desire for self-government extending beyond what is felt in Great Britain as to local affairs, but which must necessarily be subject in all respects to Imperial unity."

He said that—

> "It would be among the very first duties of the new Government to take means for forming such an estimate as only a Government can form of the present state of Ireland."

He also said that—

> "The hope and purpose of the Government was to examine carefully whether it was not possible to try some other methods of meeting the present circumstances of Ireland and of ministering to its wants, political and social—other and more effectual methods reaching nearer to the seat of the mischief and promising more stability than the method of exceptional criminal legislation."

Now, Sir, that was the substance of the communication which was made to me and my right hon. Friends at the time; and the reason why we were unable to take part with my right hon. Friend in the task which he had undertaken was one which, in our view, it was absolutely impossible to reconcile with the opinions which we had previously expressed and the opinions which we still entertained. We knew, or thought we knew, that this was an attempt to reconcile impossibilities. We thought we knew enough of the real nature of the demands made by the Irish people, so far as they are represented by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends, to realize that it was impossible to undertake an examination of this kind, and expect that it could lead to any satisfactory issue which should be at the same time consistent with what we believe to be our paramount duty to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. We felt that an inquiry and examination of this kind could not, when undertaken by a Cabinet, stop short of action. A Committee of the House of Commons or a Royal Commission might undertake an inquiry, and no harm would result—no discredit would ensue if the inquiry should lead only to negative results; but an inquiry undertaken by a Cabinet must lead to action of some kind, and in our opinion action so initiated could but lead, whether successful or not, to results which must be disastrous in one direction or another. That was the reason why we were unable to anticipate any useful result from our joining a Government formed upon this basis of inquiry and examination; and I think what has taken place has justified the course which we thought it our duty to take. Two right hon. Friends of mine, each of whom was ready to become a party to some large change in the relations between this country and Ireland, accepted this policy of examination and inquiry with better hopes and more confidence than I could feel; but at the very moment when the results of the inquiry of the Prime Minister were revealed to the Cabinet they thought it right to resign their Offices and to abandon the attempt upon which they had embarked. I do not hesitate to say that it requires no prolonged examination of the scheme which was submitted to us last night, with so much eloquence and ability by my right hon. Friend, to be in a position to say that the project for establishing the future relations between this country and Ireland is one to which, consistently with the opinions which we have always held, and which we still entertain, it would have been absolutely impossible for us to make ourselves parties. Now, Sir, that is all I have to say to the House in the nature of a personal explanation. I should like to say a few words as to what seems to me to be the position of extreme difficulty and embarrassment in which the country, this House, and especially the Liberal Party in this House, have been placed by the course which has been taken. We approached the recent General Election in circumstances of unusual preparation and consideration. The Government of my right hon. Friend had very recently been displaced, mainly by the action of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends. The policy which we had then thought it our duty to pursue had entailed upon us the bitter, the persistent, and undisguised hostility of that Party. It had been our duty to ask for, it had been our privilege to receive, the cordial and loyal support of our Party in enforcing the administration of the law as carried out by the government of Lord Spencer in Ireland, and that policy had entailed upon us the open and avowed hostility of the Party of the hon. Member for Cork. Well, Sir, we went to that Election, knowing this state of things, knowing that we were to receive the undisguised opposition of that Party. We made no attempt to conciliate or to avert it. We accepted that opposition; and, as far as the public declarations of almost every one of us were concerned, we placed ourselves before the country as pre-eminently the friends of the maintenance of law and order in Ireland, as they had been carried out by my noble Friend Lord Spencer and his Administration. We did not spare, as I think we were justified in not sparing, what we thought was the culpable laxity of right hon. Gentlemen opposite in relation to this question of the maintenance of law and order in Ireland; and we did all that we could in our speeches and in our public declarations to place ourselves before the country as the Party which was pre-eminently identified with the strict and firm administration of the law in Ireland, and the maintenance of order in that country. Well, Sir, while by this course we earned the hostility of the Party which follows the lead of the hon. Member for Cork, we came, at the same time, under certain engagements to the people of this country, and they were justified in looking to us as the Party which, under all or under any circumstances, was prepared to maintain the firm administration of the law of Ireland. Now, Sir, was there anything in the declarations of most Members of the Liberal Party to lead the country to suppose that we had in view any new policy, any radical changes, which, by the sacrifice of any of our pre-conceived convictions or antiquated prejudices, would henceforth render unnecessary that stern and firm administration of the law which we had hitherto upheld, and which would for ever obviate the necessity of a recurrence to that policy? Sir, we went to the Election mainly guided by the address which my right hon. Friend issued in September last to the electors of Mid Lothian. I shall refer in a moment to the passage in that address which especially dealt with the question of Ireland. What I want to refer to now is the position which that passage held in that address, in order to show that, in the judgment of my right hon. Friend, at that time, there was no thought and no warning held out to the country that a radical reform in the relations between Great Britain and Ireland would be the main work of the present Parliament. My right hon. Friend called special attention to four questions. He called attention to the question of Procedure in Parliament; to the question of Local Government in the whole Kingdom; to the question of the Land Laws as relating to the whole Kingdom; and to the question of Registration as the completion of the recent electoral reform. My right hon. Friend said those were the legislative subjects of the moment which had reached maturity. "The work," he said—

> "Is ready, the workmen are ready, and only await the mandate of the constituencies to proceed with it."

My right hon. Friend also referred to other matters in the most distant future. He referred to the question of Education; to the question of the Established Church; and to the question of the future position of the House of Lords. Those were subjects, he said, upon which public opinion was less ripe, and which were not mature for immediate legislative action. But, Sir, if it had occurred for one moment to my right hon. Friend at that time that the question of self-government in Ireland had reached the stage of maturity for legislative action, did not my right hon. Friend know that every one of those four subjects to which he called the immediate and pressing attention of the country must inevitably have been relegated to a future as dim and as distant as that to which he relegated the question of the Established Church, if it had been in his mind that at the very outset of the labours of this Parliament we should be called upon to deal with the enormous question of the future legislative relations between Great Britain and Ireland? Now, Sir, let me refer to the passage in the address of my right hon. Friend which referred immediately to the question of Ireland. My right hon. Friend has quoted that passage in a debate in the present Parliament, and I have no doubt most hon. Members are familiar with it; but perhaps I may read a few words from it. He said—

> "In my opinion, not now for the first time delivered, the limit is clear beyond which any desire of Ireland, Constitutionally ascertained, cannot receive the assent of Parliament. To maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity, is the first duty of every Representative of the people. Subject to this governing principle, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs is, in my view, not a source of danger, but a means of averting it, and is in the nature of a guarantee against it."

Now, Sir, that passage, however it may now be interpreted by hon. Members opposite, neither gave them much satisfaction at the time, nor did it create either very much alarm or excitement in the constituencies of Great Britain. It did not prevent hon. Gentlemen opposite from continuing to offer the most strenuous opposition to the followers of my right hon. Friend. It did not prevent me from stating in my address to my constituents that I was still convinced that, in the interest of both countries, the Legislative Union with Ireland should be maintained. No one was found to call attention to any discrepancy between the declarations of my right hon. Friend and myself, or of the numerous other candidates of the Liberal Party who made declarations in their various addresses and speeches to their constituents of much the same character. Well, Sir, if there was any misapprehension on the subject, there soon came an opportunity by which such misapprehension could have been removed. My right hon. Friend went to Mid Lothian. He knew what had been the effect of his address; how it had been received; how it had been understood both in this country and in Ireland. It is true that my right hon. Friend did then place the question of Ireland in the forefront of his policy; and the first speech he delivered in Mid Lothian was addressed to the question of Irish policy. But the language of my right hon. Friend was still reassuring. My right hon. Friend said in his first speech—

> "We are all, gentlemen, every man, woman, and child among us, convinced that it is the will of Providence that these Islands should be bound together in a United Kingdom; and from one end of Great Britain to the other I trust there will not be a single Representative returned to Parliament who for one moment would listen to any proposition tending to impair, visibly and sensibly to impair, the unity of the Empire."

Well, Sir, what is the meaning of "United Kingdom?" The words "United Kingdom" have some meaning distinct from the words "British Empire." The British Empire must endure, though separate Legislatures were conferred, not only upon Ireland, but upon England, Scotland, and Wales. But the United Kingdom is the creation of a particular Act—the Act of Union. [*Cries of* "No!"] Hon. Members deny that the United Kingdom is the creation of the Act of Union. I shall be glad to hear from any hon. Member who may follow me, whether the term "United Kingdom," as applicable to Great Britain and Ireland, was ever heard of before the Act of Union. What was the distinguishing mark—the distinguishing feature of the Act of Union? It was the creation of one Sovereign Legislature, which was to be thenceforth the sole Legislative Body for the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland. I maintain, Sir, that it is the Kingdoms, thus legislatively united, which we mean when we speak of the United Kingdon of Great Britain and Ireland. Well, my right hon. Friend was not the only statesman qualified to speak in the name of the Liberal Party. But I maintain that, among those who were so qualified to speak, there was no one—there was scarcely anyone, with the exception of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who hardly, perhaps, at that time, had acquired the right to speak in the name of any considerable portion of the Liberal Party—there was, I say, with the exception of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, no statesman so qualified, or very few, with the exception of a few Liberal candidates, who committed themselves beyond, or even to the extent to which the Prime Minister had committed himself in the passage which I have read. Then, Sir, I say that in this state of things, going to the Election in these circumstances, the country had no sufficient warning—I think I may say the country had no warning at all—that any proposals of the magnitude and vastness of those which were unfolded to us last night were to be considered in the present Parliament, much less were to form the very first subject of consideration upon the meeting of this Parliament. Sir, I am perfectly aware that there exists in our Constitution no principle of the mandate. I know that the mandate of the constituencies is as unknown to our Constitution as the distinction between fundamental laws and laws which are of an inferior sanction. But, although no principle of a mandate may exist, I maintain that there are certain limits which Parliament is morally bound to observe, and beyond which Parliament has morally not the right to go in its relations with the constituents. The constituencies of Great Britain are the source of the power, at all events, of this branch of Parliament; and I maintain that, in the presence of an emergency which could not have been foreseen, the House of Commons has no more right to initiate legislation, especially immediately upon its first meeting, of which the constituencies were not informed, and of which the constituencies might have been informed, and as to which, if they had been so informed, there is, at all events, the very greatest doubt as to what their decision might be. This is something more than a point of theoretical discussion; it is a point which has a very practical bearing. The result of the elections was not altogether that which was foreseen. The triumph of the Party sitting on these Benches was not so complete as was anticipated. It is perfectly well-known that in many constituencies where Liberal candidates were successful the issue was not decided by a very large majority. Well, Sir, it is not possible for any Member of this House to say that, if it had been known at the time of the last General Election that the first work and task of the present Parliament was going to be the entire resettlement of the relations between Great Britain and Ireland—the creation of a statutory power, with the sole legislative power in Irish affairs, and with complete control over the Irish Administration and Executive—it would not be possible for any of us to maintain that the result, in numberless elections in this country, might not have been very different from what it was; and that, instead of being placed in the minority in which they find themselves now, right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the other side of the House might not have found that they commanded a large majority. Well, then, Sir, I say that I must protest at the outset against the competence—the moral competence, for I do not deny the Constitutional competence—of this Parliament, in the presence of no adequate emergency, to initiate legislation such as that which is involved in the proposal unfolded to us last night by my right hon. Friend. So much for the course pursued before the Election. One word I desire to say as to the course taken with reference to this House itself. The debate on the Address will be within the recollection of hon. Members, and also the speech of my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government. I will not deny that that speech gave to me, and to those who, like myself, attach importance to the maintenance of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, great anxiety. The careful avoidance, by my right hon. Friend, of any declaration in favour of the maintenance of the Legislative Union, the repudiation of the existence in our Constitution of any fundamental laws, and the general tone of the speech of my right hon. Friend, I admit, led me, and many of us, to believe that my right hon. Friend had in his contemplation changes, at any rate, of a very wide and far-reaching character. But as to the definite declarations of my right hon. Friend in that speech, my right hon. Friend said, and I think he was amply justified in saying it, that he did not consider the proposals of the late Government adequate to the occasion. My right hon. Friend said he would reserve his own judgment, that he should listen with attention to anything hon. Gentlemen opposite had to propose, and, above all, that he should listen to what might be urged by hon. Members representing the great majority of the Irish people. Now, Sir, has the course which has been taken by my right hon. Friend been altogether consistent with the spirit of these declarations? My right hon. Friend did not wait to hear the proposals of hon. Gentlemen opposite. He took the very earliest opportunity of ejecting the Government.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Mid Lothian): After the Notice.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: My right hon. Friend says "after the Notice."

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes; after the Notice of coercion.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: But my right hon. Friend did not wait to hear the reasons which might be urged by the late Government in support of their proposals; and the Notice appears to have been a sufficient intimation to my right hon. Friend. Yet, if my memory does not deceive me, a summons had been addressed to hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House to attend and support the Motion of my hon. Friend who then represented Ipswich (Mr. Jesse Collings) on the evening previous to the giving of that Notice of which my right hon. Friend has just reminded me. I say that he has not listened, at all events with much attention, to the proposals of right hon. Gentlemen opposite. Has he waited to listen to what might be urged by the Members representing the majority of the people of Ireland? No, Sir; I have never heard those hon. Members formulate their demands, or tell my right hon. Friend what it is that they have been sent to Parliament to ask for. My right hon. Friend has anticipated their demands by undertaking an examination and inquiry into that which he believes, but which he does not know, at all events from the Irish Members themselves, to be the express desire and wish of the Irish people. The hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock), who last addressed the House, called attention to another point, which it seems to me difficult to dismiss altogether from our consideration. He has reminded us that the Prime Minister said that the task of dealing with questions as to the government of Ireland by a Government which did not command a clear majority in this House, and which was depending for its existence upon the Irish Party, would be a work of extreme danger and difficulty. [Mr. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!] But the consideration has not weighed for one moment with my right hon. Friend. The necessity, in his view, of ejecting the late Government and of dealing with this question himself at once, without the slightest delay, was so paramount that it has altogether over-weighted that danger which, in Mid Lothian, my right hon. Friend felt so keenly. Well, what is the result? The result is that we have before us the concession which my right hon. Friend and his Colleagues are prepared to make to what they believes, but do not know, to be the declared wish of the majority of the Irish people. I cannot avoid saying that I think the Government have taken upon themselves, in this matter, a tremendous responsibility. It appears, if we may judge from the speeches of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy), that this proposal will be accepted by the Irish Party—at all events, if certain Amendments are carried in Committee, it will be accepted by them—and it would be strange, I think, if it were not so accepted, whether it be a measure altogether satisfactory to them, or whether it be not, for, undoubtedly, it contains within it so much that will give them a vantage ground for demanding fresh concessions and further measures, that it will be strange indeed if, by any action of theirs, they were to endanger the passing of the Bill. But, Sir, there are other parties to this measure besides the Representatives of the majority in Ireland. England and Scotland have yet to be consulted, and, as I have already endeavoured to show, their opinion on this question has never been taken. It may be that this measure will really be accepted by the Irish Party only as an instalment; and it may be, especially under these circumstances, that the people of this country will not be willing that changes so vast and so wide-reaching should be made. But, whatever may be the fate of this measure, its mere introduction by a responsible Government, by a Minister wielding, and justly wielding, the influence and authority of my right hon. Friend, will have done much that can never be recalled. This measure will be henceforth the minimum of the Irish national demand; it will be the starting-point and the vantage-ground of whatever proposals they may hereafter think it necessary to bring forward. It will remain on record as that which a great Minister has proposed, not in response to any formulated demand of the Irish Representatives, but as what he himself thinks is a reasonable concession to justice to offer to the Irish people. From this point of view it seems to me that if, as I think is extremely likely, this measure does not command the support—the intelligent and informed support—of the majority of the people of this country, its introduction without, as I think, adequate preparation or consideration will have vastly added in the future to the already great difficulties of the government of Ireland. And now let me say a word or two upon the historical argument, by which a concession of this kind is sometimes justified. My right hon. Friend referred last night to the history of Grattan's Parliament. My right hon. Friend spoke, I think justly, in terms of commendation of much of the conduct of that Parliament. I think he expressed an opinion that if that Parliament had been permitted to continue it might have done a great deal to solve and to remove the difficulties which have beset us in the government of Ireland since it ceased to exist. Well, that is a proposition which it is quite impossible to prove. Grattan's Parliament was a Protestant Parliament, a Parliament in which the influence of the landlords was entirely paramount; and it is just as probable that a Parliament so composed might have delayed, rather than have forwarded, those reforms in Irish Administration, which we all now acknowledge to have been delayed too long. We may grant that the Parliament of the United Kingdom delayed too long Catholic Emancipation; we may grant that it too long maintained Protestant ascendancy in Ireland; we may grant that the land legislation of the Imperial Parliament was too long conceived in the interests of the landlord class and in disregard of those of the occupiers and cultivators; but it is beyond the possibility of proof that an Irish Parliament, composed as Grattan's Parliament was, would have initiated and carried out the reforms that were needed before the Imperial Parliament did so. It is just as likely that the authority of the Imperial Government and of the Imperial Parliament might have had to be invoked for the protection of the oppressed majority of the Irish people as that the Grattan Parliament would have carried out those reforms one day sooner than they did take place. It is equally impossible to prove that any Government or Parliament could have averted any of the evils that have befallen Ireland since that time. We are a great deal too apt to attribute omnipotence to Parliaments and to Governments. In the presence of physical and economical causes and changes I believe it is much nearer the truth to say that Parliaments and Governments, whatever they may be, are almost powerless. Owing to physical and economical changes, the population of Ireland, as we have just been reminded by my hon. Friend the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock), has been very largely reduced; the wealth of the country, owing to economical changes, has also been reduced; and it is impossible for any ingenuity to prove that in such a state of things want and famine, and the discontent arising from want and famine, would not have occurred, and that with that discontent would not have arisen the same difficulties as have been found in the Government of Ireland. There seems to me to be altogether another aspect to the historical side of this question than that which has been invoked in defence of a measure of this kind. Legislation in the direction of a Repeal of the Union, or any policy in the direction of a Repeal of the Union, is sometimes spoken of as if it would do something in the way of restoring a state of things which existed previously to the Union, and that would have continued to exist if the Union had not taken place. I maintain that the restoration of an Irish Parliament, or of anything approaching to an Irish Parliament, will not be the restoration of that which existed before the Union, but will be the creation of a state of things as absolutely and entirely different from that as it is possible to conceive. I have already pointed out that the Parliament called Grattan's Parliament was a Protestant Parliament, in which the landlords were supreme. At the same time, there existed in Ireland a powerful Protestant Established Church; and there existed also a powerful landed aristocracy, exercising complete control over their estates, and with that control exercising a permanent political influence. All these things, all these institutions, have been completely changed. The Parliament which would be restored now would not be a Protestant, but would be a Roman Catholic Parliament. The Established Church has been swept away; and instead of a Roman Catholic priesthood, which at the time of the Union was without political influence at all, we have a Roman Catholic clergy wielding a large political influence. The owners of land in Ireland have been deprived of almost all control over their estates; and with the loss of that control they have lost the political influence which they formerly enjoyed. Now, Sir, it is not a question whether all these changes have been wise and just changes. I believe, in the main, that the changes have been wise and have been just; but they are changes which have been made by the paramount and superior authority of the Imperial Parliament. They are not changes which have been made by the efforts or exertions of the people of Ireland themselves. They are changes which have been imposed by the superior and overwhelming authority of the people of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. It may have been, and I believe it was, substantially just that those changes should be made in the interests of the great majority of the people of Ireland; but, at the same time, it is not less just that the minority which has been deprived by our action, and not by the action of the people of Ireland, of almost all the rights and privileges and power which they possessed at the time of the Union, should not be handed over without due and adequate protection at the hands of that power by whose influence those vast and far-reaching changes have been effected, and by whose influence the whole balance of the political situation in Ireland has been changed since the time of the Union. Sir, I cannot believe that the people of England will consent to that minority being handed over without due and adequate protection—without greater, more effectual, and more adequate protection—than is afforded by the provisions of this Bill. My right hon. Friend referred last night to Grattan. I believe if Grattan could have been present at the introduction of this Bill there is probably not a word he ever uttered in opposition to the Union that he would desire to recall. I think it is probable that he would have found in almost everything which has taken place since the Union the fulfilment of all his anticipations. I am sure that all his anticipations would have been more than fulfilled if he could have been present at the introduction of this Bill. The state of things which will be created in Ireland will not be the restoration of the state of things for which Grattan contended; and I believe that if he could be present among us to-day he would be the first to lift up his voice against that which, while nominally a restoration to Ireland of her Parliament, is, in effect and in reality, the creation of a state of things as opposed to that which Grattan desired to bring about as it is possible to conceive. Now, Sir, my right hon. Friend, having resolved to make some concession to the demands of the Irish Parliament, as expressed by their Representatives, had no lack of choice between plans and policies which he might adopt. It was open to him to adopt a plan in the direction of what has, up to now, been generally understood as the extension of local government in Ireland. It was open to him to adopt something in the nature of the plan which has been referred to to-night by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) as a plan of National Councils. I have never concealed my own opinion that the extension to Ireland of any considerable changes in what we understand as local self-government may be fraught with considerable difficulty, and may add considerably to the difficulties of Ireland. But, at the same time, I admit that if these Kingdoms are to be made a United Kingdom, the people of this country will never tolerate any marked or real inequality between the institutions of the Three Kingdoms, and that they will demand that perhaps not identical, but practical, equality of institutions shall be conceded to Ireland. I do not desire to express any opinion, or to attempt to limit what may be the ultimate result of a reform of our system of local self-government in any of the Three Kingdoms. It is quite possible, when the task is taken in hand, that it may be found that the desire which is felt by the people of the Three Kingdoms and the necessities of the case are not limited merely to the creation of County Boards or Municipal Councils, but that some larger provincial, perhaps even national, organization and co-ordination of Local Authorities may be required in England, Scotland, Ireland, and in Wales. When that time comes, let Ireland share in whatever is granted to England, Scotland, or to Wales; but when it comes it will be, in my opinion, the outgrowth of institutions which have not yet been created. The superstructure will be raised on foundations which have not yet been laid; and it would be, in my opinion, unwise and impolitic in reference to either England or to any of the Three Kingdoms to attempt to begin at the top instead of allowing the natural result of a growth of reform in local government which the Three Kingdoms equally desire, and which is naturally developed. But, Sir, I conceive that in the progress of the examination which my right hon. Friend has undertaken he has discovered that the demand which the Irish people make is not a demand for the reform or the extension of local self-government—as that term is here understood—at all. What that demand really is, is a demand for practical separation from this country, for natural independence, for the power to make their own laws and to shape their own institutions, without any reference whatever to the opinion that may be held here in respect to the wisdom, the justice, the equity of those laws, or to the fitness or the wisdom of those institutions. That is practically the demand which my right hon. Friend has undertaken to satisfy, and not the demand for what is called local self-government. And here, again, my right hon. Friend has had no want of models or examples. He has had before him the example of Sweden and Norway, which has already been referred to. He has had the example of Austro-Hungary, where a dual system prevails; he has had the Federal example of the United States of America and of the Swiss Confederation; and also he has had before him the example of another form of self-government as presented in the constitution of our own great self-governing Colonies. It was open to my right hon. Friend to consider whether he should select any of these, or combine any of them; and this is practically what my right hon. Friend has done. But, before it is possible to consider whether any Constitution applicable to the circumstances of Great Britain and Ireland can be framed on the example of any of these models, it is necessary to inquire a little whether there is any similarity between the case of Great Britain and Ireland and their case. There exists in the case of Great Britain and Ireland no such equality of power as exists in the case of Austro-Hungary, which makes an evenly-balanced dual Constitution not only a possibility, but even a necessity. There exist no conditions similar to those which exist among the Federal States of America. They are animated by as intense a pride in their national existence as in their State independence. They are so numerous that the exercise of the Federal authority, the pressure of the Federal authority, the coercion, if necessary, of the Federal authority, is not felt by any of those States to be the action one State upon another; but it is the collective authority of all. When a question has arisen in which this was not the case—when, as on the question of Slavery, there has arisen between the United States of America anything like an evenly-balanced contention, then even the wise provisions of the United States Constitution itself have broken down, have provided no legal or Constitutional means of settlement, but have compelled a resort to the arbitrament of civil war. Sir, there is no similarity, I say, then, between the case of Great Britain and Ireland and that of the Federal authority in respect to any State of the American Union. There is no such authority which can be brought to bear in Ireland of a Federal character which will not be felt to be the coercion of a less powerful State by a more powerful neighbour, or which will have anything of the nature of a collective authority. Again, Sir, the United States have not in their Constitution anything which resembles the Sovereign authority exercised by the Imperial Legislature; neither is there in the Executive Government nor in the Congress, nor does there reside in any individual State, anything approaching to or resembling that power. The power of the States is equally balanced, and is held under the control of a Supreme Court of Law, which all the powers of the State willingly, and with the consent of all the inhabitants of the State, acknowledge to have every paramount authority. Well, it is impossible that we can establish anything resembling that in the remotest degree without a reconstruction of the whole Constitution; and no one thinks it possible for a moment for us to undertake that. Well, then, is there any greater similarity between the present case and the case of any of our self-governing Colonies? My right hon. Friend referred yesterday to the case of these Colonies. He attached great importance to the 60 miles of sea which divide Great Britain from Ireland. He did not refer to the 3,000 miles which separate England from her nearest self-governing Colony, or the still greater number of thousands of miles which separate her from the most distant of those Colonies. The distance which separates our Colonies from us makes any analogy which may be drawn between their case and that of Ireland utterly fallacious. Beyond this, it is perfectly well known that the connection which exists between our self-governing Colonies and the United Kingdom is purely a voluntary connection. We have granted to these Colonies practical independence. If they are willing still to be bound to, and to form part of, the British Empire; if they are willing to have their foreign policy regulated by the Imperial Government; if they are willing to submit to the nominal superiority of British law and British authority over their internal affairs, it is by virtue of a voluntary compact by which they accept our direction of their foreign relations that they gain the Imperial protection of our Fleets and Armies. But everyone knows that the real interference or authority exercised by the Imperial Government in the domestic affairs of the Colonies is practically nothing. It is true that there is a veto which is sometimes exercised; it is true that there does reside in the Imperial Parliament a power of making laws if she chooses which will be nominally valid in the Colonies; but it is equally well known that no Government would ever dream of enforcing their power of a veto, or of making a law which would bind one of these self-governing Colonies in opposition to anything like a strong opinion expressed against it in that Colony. We know, also, that if any one of those Colonies were to express a strong, a real, and a determined desire to separate itself from the nominal connection which now binds it to this country, there is no Parliament, there is no statesman, who would attempt at this time of day to prevent that consummation by force. I say that, under these circumstances, there is no similarity between the case of our Colonies and that of Ireland. When my right hon. Friend spoke of the maintenance of the unity of the Empire as that which is the first duty of every Representative of the people to maintain, it must have been some other unity than that of which we speak when we speak of maintaining the unity with the Colonies. My right hon. Friend would never dream of saying that it was the first duty of every Representative of the people to maintain under all or any circumstances the unity of this country with Canada or with the Colony of Victoria; and, therefore, it must be considered, when he himself agreed that we cannot permit absolute separation between England and Ireland, that he must have had some other unity in his mind than the unity which binds these Colonial Dependencies to this country, and which it is our first duty to maintain. I have endeavoured very imperfectly to refer to the proposals of the Government. I am not going into any details of these proposals to-night. I am not going even to ask for any detailed explanation with regard to them; but, full and lucid as was the statement of my right hon. Friend, I think there are still some points on which further information should be given before the conclusion of this debate, and if the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) is going to follow me, I ask him to give some information as to a point which was omitted by my right hon. Friend. My right hon. Friend said nothing about the retention of any power of veto residing either in the Imperial Government or the Imperial Parliament.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I referred to the Prerogatives of the Crown.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: I am coming to that. My right hon. Friend did use one sentence in which he stated that all the Prerogatives of the Crown would be maintained, and it is possible that in that sentence he meant to convey that the power of veto would be retained. But what the House would like to know is whether it is the power of veto which has fallen into disuse by the Crown over the Acts of the Imperial Parliament, or whether it is proposed to maintain, or rather to create—for it would practically be created —a power of veto over the Acts of the domestic Legislature of Ireland, which shall resemble that practical veto which is occasionally, though rarely, exercised by the Imperial Government in relation to the affairs of the self-governing Colonies, considering how far the scheme is framed upon the model of our Colonial institutions, considering also what my right hon. Friend has said—that what he regards as the fundamental principle of the Union is still to be maintained—namely, the full sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament—I cannot but believe that it is intended that some power of veto similar to that which exists in the case of the Colonies should be retained by the Imperial Government. That is a point which has not, I think, been referred to by my right hon. Friend. One other question I should like to ask on a totally different branch of the subject. My right hon. Friend did not fully explain a very important point connected with the Royal Irish Constabulary. The Royal Irish Constabulary are to be retained, I understand, on their present footing, subject to the same authority for a period of two years. But how is it supposed that that authority is to be exercised. The Irish Constabulary is now——

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I am anxious that what I did say as to the Irish Constabulary should be correctly understood. Perhaps it is not very easy to understand, and my meaning was not correctly apprehended by my noble

Friend. What I intended to convey particularly and absolutely, in the first instance, was that as to all the present members of the force the present conditions of service and the present authority would be unconditionally maintained. I then referred to the question of two years as a matter for subsequent consideration.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: I do not quite understand what is to become of the Royal Irish Constabulary during the period of their existence. They are now under the control of the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary—the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary being Ministers who are responsible to the Imperial Parliament. Are they in future to be under the direct command of the Viceroy, who is to become, as I understand, a sort of irresponsible official, or under the command of whatever Irish official may take the place now occupied by my right hon. Friend? Until these points are cleared up, it seems to me absolutely impossible for the House to understand what is really to be the future position of the Royal Irish Constabulary. Further, I would like to know what is the meaning of the limit of "two years." At the expiration of the two years what is going to happen? Are they to remain in any other capacity or to be dissolved, or is it to depend on the Irish Government or the Imperial Parliament to dissolve them? I have said that I do not want to go into any details in this matter; but there is, I admit, one consideration which is not one of detail which seems to be to be absolutely fatal to the existence of this Legislature. If this is a plan which is good for Ireland, I conceive that it ought to be good and must be good for England, Scotland, and Wales. If Scotland or Wales demand that this plan should be extended to them, I do not see how that demand can possibly be refused. Supposing they make the demand, what would be the resulting state of things? We should have in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales domestic Legislatures, having full control over their own affairs. So far, very well. We should have in England a domestic Legislature also, with full control over English affairs; but we should, in addition to this, find this House, from which every Irish, Scotch, and Welsh Member was excluded, having full control, not only over the domestic legislation of England, but over the Imperial legislation of the whole of the Empire. All the foreign policy of this Empire, all the Colonial policy, all the Indian policy of this Empire would in future be controlled by Representatives of English constituencies alone. I should like to ask—I know what the answer would be—but I should like to ask what would the Scotch Members say to such a scheme? Would Scotchmen like to be excluded from all control over foreign and Colonial affairs whatever? Why, Sir, they would repudiate it. While it would be degrading to them, it would be unfair, financially, to the Irish, Scotch, and Welsh people that they should contribute to the expense of an Imperial policy—in the case of Ireland it would be a fixed contribution—when they would have no voice whatever in controling it. It would be as unfair to ask Scotland and Wales to pay contributions under these circumstances towards a war with which they had nothing to do, as it would be now to ask that the expense of any warlike enterprize this country may be called upon to engage in for the defence of Imperial interests should henceforth become a charge upon the taxpayers of England alone. Of course, I shall be told that Scotland is not likely to ask this, and that it is not necessary, therefore, to contemplate so absurd a result. But then the question arises, if such a result is, on the face of it, absolutely absurd in the case of Scotland or of Wales, is there not a strong probability that in the eyes of the people of Ireland, at no distant time, it will appear equally absurd? Reference has been made tonight to a speech made on this subject by the Predecessor of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell)—Mr. Butt—in which he also endeavoured to repudiate on the part of the people of Ireland any desire to be dissociated from the control of the Imperial affairs of the British Empire. Perhaps the House will allow me to quote a few words from one of the most eloquent speeches I ever heard within the walls of this House, a speech which was made by the late Mr. P. J. Smyth, who was, I think, the Member for Westmeath. I know that Mr. Smyth was not in agreement with hon. Gentlemen who now represent Irish constituencies, and I am not going to quote his opinion as words of authority now. I will only quote them as language which may be used in Ireland at no distant time. Mr. Smyth, in the course of that speech—I think it was delivered in 1876—and the whole of it is of the highest eloquence, and well deserving perusal by any Member of this House. Mr. Smyth used these words—

> "Were Ireland a discovery of the 19th century, like one of those coral isles—
>
> 'That like to rich and various gems inlay
> The unadorned bosom of the deep,'
>
> she might commission a Representative to ask this honourable House to make a Constitution for her. But Ireland is an ancient Kingdom, with a far-reaching past and a not inglorious history. Her people represent an ancient and a famous race, with a past and a history, with feelings, traditions, and instincts all their own; and it is futile to suppose for a moment that such a country and such a people will accept a place in the Imperial system lower than that of the smallest Colony born of yesterday, and indebted to fortuitous circumstances for a fluctuating and heterogeneous population."—(3 *Hansard*, [230] 756.)

Is it not likely that at not some very distant day these may be the sentiments of a large portion of the Irish people, and that new grievances may arise if it is discovered by the people of Ireland to what an inferior position in the Imperial system the scheme before the House is likely to reduce them? Well, Sir, what will remain of the unity of the Empire when this Bill shall have passed? We shall be under one Sovereign; but the question is, shall we be under one Sovereign power? The Sovereign power, as I have already ventured to remind the House, is the power of the Imperial Parliament. Will the power of the Imperial Parliament remain Sovereign in Ireland? I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman will explain that by the power of the veto the reserved power and the validity of Imperial laws in Ireland, the Sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament will be nominally maintained.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I rise to Order. I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is in Order, in derogation of Her Majesty, to speak as the noble Marquess is speaking of the Sovereignty of Parliament; and I would remind you, Sir, of the ruling of your Predecessor, Mr. Brand, in that Chair upon the same subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: There has been nothing in the words of the noble Lord to call for any intervention from the Chair.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: I conceive that the Constitutional Sovereignty of the Queen is a portion of the Imperial Legislature, and the definition which I have given of the Sovereign power in this country is one derived from a work which was referred to yesterday by my right hon. Friend—that of Professor Dicey on the Constitution—and to that book I will refer the hon. Member if he thinks there is anything disloyal in the language I have just used. What I want to know is, whether the Sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament in Ireland will henceforth be a real or merely a nominal Sovereignty? Nominally, I admit, it will remain. Will it be real? If this measure is passed, what will be the power by which the Sovereign Parliament will be able to enforce its will if it should in any respect differ from the decisions of the Legislature in Ireland? The Imperial Parliament and the Imperial Government will have nothing to do with the appointment of the Judges of the Courts of Law, who will be absolutely severed from the Imperial control. It will have nothing to do with the administrative and executive Departments of the country, and it will have no means whatever to enforce any decrees which may be passed by the Courts of Law in Ireland. [Mr. GLADSTONE made a remark which was inaudible.] Well, Sir, I shall be happy then to know what is the exact executive machinery by which my right hon. Friend thinks that the will of the Sovereign Imperial Parliament would be enforced in Ireland, if this law passes, in the case of any conflict of opinion with the domestic Legislature? It may be said that the Military Forces of the Crown will remain under the entire control of the Imperial Government and the Imperial Parliament. But if that is all we are to rely upon, it appears to me to be nothing less than to call in civil war as the sanction—the ordinary sanction—of the proceedings of the Government. It is impossible to administer the affairs of the country by means of an Army. You may declare a state of rebellion; you may dispossess the Government which you have created; you may declare a state of martial law; you may govern the country by martial law; but that is a resort to which, I suppose, hon. Memters do not look forward with hope or satisfaction. It is a course to which we can have resort only in the last extremity, and in all the ordinary cases of difference it is not too despondent to anticipate what will occur. I maintain that, as far as I can understand, there is no legal or Constitutional means by which the Imperial Parliament will be able henceforth to exert authority in Ireland contrary to the will of the Irish Parliament. Well, it may be said that it is to be hoped occasions of difference may not arise. I do not cherish this hope. We have had the experience of the last few years. The ideas of the leaders of the Irish people upon a great many important subjects in connection with the administration of the law are diametrically opposed to the ideas and opinions of the vast majority of the people of Great Britain. The people of Great Britain—England and Scotland—have relatives, and connections, and friends in Ireland, and great interests in Ireland, and the people of Great Britain will not be indifferent to what passes in Ireland; and if—I will not say injustice or oppression occur—but if they think that oppression or injustice is taking place, the minority in Ireland will appeal to the people of England and Scotland, and will not appeal in vain. The occasions of collision will be too likely, in fact will be certain, to occur; and I firmly believe that this measure, which is brought forward by my right hon. Friend in the interests of peace, will be of all measures the measure which is most likely to furnish occasions of even more serious differences than have ever arisen in Ireland in the past. Now, Sir, I must apologize most deeply to the House for taking up so much of its time. There is much which I would say if I did not feel that I have already trespassed far too long. I know the main argument which has been presented by my right hon. Friend in support of this Bill is that it is an alternative to the system of coercion. My right hon. Friend has expressed a strong opinion that what he calls the worn-out and inefficient coercion of the past is useless even as a means of preserving order in Ireland at all; and if coercion is to be resorted to at all, and if coercion is to be resorted to in the future, it must be coercion of a real and far more stern and severe character. I cannot help thinking that my right hon. Friend, for the purpose of his argument, has somewhat overstated the difficulties and the inefficiency and the impossibility of continuing to govern Ireland by the mingled system of remedial and repressive legislation. I do not admit that history, and especially recent history, supports this argument of my right hon. Friend. I appeal to the experience of his own Government; and I maintain that Lord Spencer, by his administration, by the firm exercise of the powers conferred upon him by the Crimes Act, did, to a great extent, restore the operation of the law, and the confidence in that operation of the law. I believe that if that law, instead of terminating as it did at the close of last Session, had been a permanent Act, to be maintained as long as the necessity continued, and if, at the same time, the change of Government last year had not occurred, I do not think we should have heard my right hon. Friend yesterday declaring that the future government of Ireland on the same lines as in the past was impossible. Sir, I think it is necessary that we should clear our ideas a little on this subject of coercion. We have accepted far too readily the term "coercion" which has been applied to it by its opponents, and which has been generally interpreted as a sort of synonym for tyranny. What, Sir, is the reason? Why is it that powers in excess of those of the ordinary law have had very generally to be conferred upon the Executive Government in Ireland? It is because the ordinary law has not received that ready and willing assent from the people of Ireland that it receives in the remaining parts of the Kingdom. But the law in support of which these extraordinary powers have been evoked is the same law, the same system of law, administered on the same principle which prevails over the whole of the United Kingdom. If that law is an unjust law, it is in our power, without the creation of a domestic Legislature in Ireland, to alter it. If it is a just law it is our duty to maintain it; and, Sir, it is altogether a mistake to suppose that we can escape from our responsibility for converting a just into an unjust law, by devolving our legislative responsibility upon any Body whatever which to our knowledge would use it in a manner different from that in which we should use it ourselves. If the law is a just law, I say it ought not only to be maintained, but it ought also to be executed; and we cannot escape from our responsibility by devolving on any other Executive authority power which we know will be used, and which is intended to be used, in a manner which we ourselves condemn. I admit that there has been great difficulty—and perhaps there has been failure—in the government of Ireland; but, Sir, I think that is not altogether due to the causes alleged by my right hon. Friend, and the doctrine that the Irish people do not understand law which comes to them in a foreign garb may not, perhaps, on examination be found to hold water. There are other causes to be found for the failure of our system of government in Ireland, and among them has been the fact that Irish questions and the government of Ireland have too long and too habitually been made the battle-ground of political Parties. Questions of Irish order have been too often subordinated to what, I have no doubt, has been honestly thought at the time to be the interests of a superior or more pressing character. But, Sir, I do not admit that because this has been so it need always be so. If, indeed, this be a necessity, then I am afraid no alternative lies before us, but either an alternative resort to civil war or an abandonment at once of our duties, our privileges, and our responsibilities. But, Sir, I refuse to believe it. I believe, at all events, that now, if ever—now that the people of this country have been brought face to face with the alternative of the disruption of the Empire on the one hand, or all the evils and calamities which I admit will follow on the rejection of this unfortunate scheme, I believe that now, at all events, the people of this country will require that their Representatives shall, in relation to Irish affairs, agree to sink all minor differences, and to unite as one man for the maintenance of this great Empire, to hand it down to our successors compact and complete, as we have inherited it from our forefathers, and at the same time to maintain throughout its length and breadth the undisputed supremacy of the law.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Sir, I think I shall best begin the remarks which I have to offer to the House by answering two or three special questions which my noble Friend put to me a short time before he sat down. I must say I think it would be more convenient and satisfactory if my noble Friend would wait until he actually saw the text of the Bill, as that will inform him in a more authentic and indisputable manner than any inadequate words of mine can do, of what the precise scope of this or that provision of the Bill is. As to the point of veto there is no doubt; and I think the Prime Minister stated it clearly enough when he said that the whole of the Prerogative of the Crown would remain absolutely intact; that the veto, therefore, will remain subject to no more limitation than exists either in the case of a Colony or any other political relations. With reference to the power of Parliament, of course the power of Parliament is absolutely illimitable; and if to-morrow or on the morrow of the day that we have passed this Statute, if we do pass it—[*Ironical cheers from the Opposition.*]—perhaps you, the Opposition, will pass it if we do not—on the morrow of the day after this Statute, or any other for the same purpose, shall have been passed, it is perfectly within the competence of this Parliament, subject to what is well known as Parliamentary contracts—such contracts as I hope to see incorporated in the Bill—it is perfectly within the competence of Parliament to repeal the Act. A very important point was touched by my noble Friend when he asked what our relations with the Royal Irish Constabulary would be. I have only to say in answer to that that the Royal Irish Constabulary will remain in every respect and detail under the control of the Lord Lieutenant. [An hon. MEMBER: For how long?] No doubt, on all these points in a few hours, or at all events in two or three days, if the House will be good enough to give us leave to bring in the Bill, the exact words will be in the possession of hon. Members, and they will be in the best position to form a precise judgment upon the question of what the Government propose to do. The debate to-night has been, we must admit, in some respects, a painful one. It would have been to me very painful if I had thought during last autumn, when I took some modest part in the campaign which ended in the election of this Parliament, that the first time when I should have occasion to claim the indulgence of the House to listen to an address from me should find me vindicating my position against two of my oldest comrades in political arms. But the occasion has come. They admit, as I do, that this is a crisis, and these are issues, when private considerations must yield, and when, with whatever pain, we must each and all of us take the position which our consciences commend to us. But apart from private considerations I confess that I am affected by public considerations. If we in this Assembly were all united in a common desire and by a common sense of public necessity, the problem of how to build up social order in Ireland is so complex and so entangled, that it would tax the highest powers of the ablest men in all quarters of the House to come near a solution of it. If you think of the economic difficulties, of the religious difficulties, of the curious perversities of the geographical mixture of religion and race in Ireland, we can easily see how terrible the task is of welding all these elements into a corporate whole and stable society. But we are not united. We confront not one or two, but three Parties; our own Party is divided and sub-divided, and the Party opposite will be very different from what it was at the end of the last Parliament, if it is not at least as much divided as we are. It is not so long ago since we heard right hon. Gentlemen, then sitting on this Bench, and who are now sitting there, denouncing reactionary Members from Ulster. Something was said last night by the eloquent Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket), although, perhaps, not in a very good spirit, about raking up old quarrels. Attempts have been made to show that the language once exchanged between the occupants of this Bench and the Irish Benches below the Gangway was not all of one kind. This raking up of inconsistencies seems to me to be a very childish and a very idle pastime. There is no quarter of the House where there is not much in the past and in the near past, both in word and deed, to regret and to be ashamed of. I deprecate, Sir, this method of carrying on a great controversy, and I do not do it, if the House will permit me to say so, because I have a guilty conscience. I am pretty disinterested in the matter, and I hope the House and hon. Gentlemen opposite will not think me arrogant when I say that there is nobody in this House with less to fear from the ransacking of previous utterances about Ireland than the very humble individual who is now addressing them. I think, Sir, that for the purposes of this high Constitutional debate we should pass a great amnesty. I am not speaking in any spirit of sentimentalism, for there is nobody in the House who takes less of a rose-pink view of Irish politics than I do. I do not want you to shut your eyes to plain facts, and I do not wish that we should live in a fool's paradise about Ireland. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), speaking last night with an eloquence which to me was very pathetic and very powerful, referred to what he termed the assassination literature of America, a title which I do not at all dispute. We all know the dark and sinister and subterranean forces by which that literature is nourished. I only say, in order to illustrate my position, that I am not going to prophesy smooth things about the situation to-night, about the present or future of Ireland; but, on the other hand, I do not want to make too much of these dark, and sinister, and subterranean forces. As an Englishman, I am not afraid of them. These desperate, unknown, and cowardly devices will never, I believe, on the lips of any of us, be an argument for making concessions which we are not prepared to defend on broad grounds of policy. But I do say this—and I earnestly commend it to the attention of the House—that in resisting the establishment of a domestic Legislature for Ireland, which my right hon. Friend proposes, you are doing exactly what the desperadoes referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, armed with their dynamite and their daggers, would most desire. If you reject our proposal, and if you dismiss us from Office, you will be doing exactly what these violent extremists most ardently wish for. The right hon. Gentleman made a great point with regard to the kind of men who would be likely to be returned to a domestic Legislature such as we propose to constitute. He asked whether we would hand over the government of Ireland to a Parliament of Sheridans and Egans?

Mr. TREVELYAN (Hawick, &c.): In which Sheridan and Egan might sit.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: Sheridan and Egan, and, I presume, others of the same kidney. Now, Sir, I particularly invite the attention of the House to what this really means. Such a prophecy is not an assault upon Sheridan and Egan; it is an indictment preferred against the Irish constituencies. By such language you charge the Irish constituencies with being in incurable sympathy with those whom we must, for the purposes of argument, take to be the very worst of men. But my right hon. Friend was one of the prime movers —indeed, it is one of his claims to our esteem and admiration and honour—he was one of the prime movers for the extension of the franchise which, as it now exists, is exactly what gives to these constituencies their new power. But if you think—and this is a point which I wish very much to press—if you think so ill of the people of Ireland as to believe that they are so radically depraved as to be in sympathy with murderers and conspirators, there is only one course open to you. Do not tinker and potter about granting them freely-elected Local Bodies. Have the courage of your opinions; take up a bold position—and, having the courage of your opinions, take up the only position on which your argument really rests, and say openly, what many of you think, that Ireland is not fit for self-government, and is not ripe for representative institutions. Sir, that would be a distinct policy to adopt, and it may come to that. I am not at all sure that, if you reject our proposals, it will not come to that; but I declare, Liberal as I am, Radical as I am, like my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), I would rather accept a policy of that kind, than go on upon the lines which we have been pursuing for the last 50 years. Sir, I could have wished that my two right hon. Friends would have gone a little further than they did in developing their alternative schemes. Powerful and weighty as was the speech of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington)—it is almost impertinent for me to pay him a compliment—powerful and acute as was the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, I could not help asking myself, as I listened to them, whether they understand as well as they would if they filled the Office which I now hold, what the immediate problem of the hour is—whether they understand that the problem before us—the immediate and pressing problem—is, "How you are to govern Ireland?" My noble Friend has expatiated pretty freely upon the position taken up by the Prime Minister during the Elections. All that, Sir, is old history, The noble Lord opposite (Lord Randolph Churchill) will surely admit that history became old with astonishing rapidity within a week after the opening of Parliament. And that is the point which explains the question put by the noble Marquess as to why my right hon. Friend changed his policy. The answer is simple. On the first night of the Session the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) made a speech which filled me with great satisfaction, because it was to the effect that Ireland was, on the whole, in a satisfactory state—at any rate, that the figures as to crime were satisfactory, and that the Government had not made up their minds as to bringing in the exceptional legislation of which they afterwards gave us notice. It was this announcement that made a complete difference in the situation, and it was upon that announcement that my right hon. Friend took the course which the noble Marquess has criticized. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) must not forget that before he himself committed himself to contingent sedition in Ulster, he had advanced to contingent sedition from hypothetical coercion, and that in itself was a piece of vacillation of which I shall show the moral later on in my remarks. Why, the hypothetical coercion of the noble Lord was in the words put into the Queen's Speech, which said that if this or that happened there would be coercion. That I call hypothetical coercion. The contingent sedition was when the noble Lord went to Belfast and said that if this Parliament, of whose supremacy he professes to be the great champion, were to pass some law of which he did not approve, he should recommend the Ulster people to adopt courses which I cannot myself distinguish from courses of sedition. My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) took a difference, which I confess I found it hard to justify, between the reticence which was imposed upon him in respect of my right hon. Friend's proposals for self-government in Ireland and the reticence imposed upon him in connection with the proposals which my right hon. Friend has brought before the Cabinet with respect to land purchase. My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham admits that in the case of the question of self-government for Ireland it would not have been proper for him to make his explanation of the reasons why he quitted us before the scheme of self-government had been laid before the House. But the scheme of land purchase has not yet been laid before the House, and it seems to me that the same considerations which justified the exclusion of one matter from explanation for a period of a fortnight would justify the exclusion of the other matter until the measure itself is introduced.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): My right hon. Friend misunderstands the misconception which arose between myself and the Prime Minister. I do not question the right of the Prime Minister to limit and to make conditions as to the time at which an explanation by a retiring Colleague shall be given; and I should not have complained if, in answer to my inquiry, he had informed me that it was his desire that I should postpone my explanation until he should have introduced his land scheme. But what I stated as to how the misconception arose was that I had applied to him for permission to explain, after his statement upon the introduction of the Bill for local government, the reasons why I left the Cabinet, that I had, as I thought, obtained permission, and that at the last moment I found that that permission had been revoked.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: Well, Sir, I am not well practised in these high matters, and it is not for me to make any further comment upon that part of my right hon. Friend's speech. There was one reference of my right hon. Friend which I thought rather unkind. I thought it a pity that he should have made any reference to what my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister admits to have been a mistaken judgment upon a great historical question. If the Prime Minister did, indeed, upon a great historical occasion say that somebody had made the Southern States of America a nation, it was a mistake. But history will judge that mistake very leniently when the record of this century is written, and when in looking back upon Italy, upon Greece, upon Bulgaria, and now upon Ireland, posterity will know that my right hon. Friend has at least played his part in the making of nations. Sir, the detailed criticisms of my right hon. Friend upon the proposals that were laid before the House in the speech of the Prime Minister last night were worthy, as anything that comes from him must be, of very close and careful attention. But some of his remarks struck me as rather forced. When he said we were going to exclude trade and navigation from the scope of the domestic Legislature I think he laid too much stress on mere technical terms of law. We are not going to exclude bankruptcy from the scope of the domestic Legislature. My right hon. Friend, after all, went very far, as he himself admits, in the direction in which his late Colleagues have persisted. My right hon. Friend admits that his differences with us are not on these small points of trade and navigation. But though he was prepared apparently to go so far as a statutory Body with legislative powers sitting in Dublin, he could not consent to that Body having in its control directly or indirectly such matters as the appointment of Judges and control of the Customs and Excise. In the matter of the control of the Customs and Excise we have met my right hon. Friend; but as to the matter of the nomination of the Judges, that is hardly an issue so important—important as it is—as would warrant the breaking up of a Cabinet, and what looks like the pulverization of a Party. What is more, that is not an issue on which my right hon. Friend should found so grave a resolution, because the American States, to which my right hon. Friend would not object to reduce or to raise Ireland, have, of course, the power of nominating their own Judges without any reference whatever to Federal legislation.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I am very sorry to interrupt my right hon. Friend, but I am sure he would be very sorry to misunderstand me. I did not say that I would put Ireland on a level with an American State; but I did say that in seeking the solution of this great come when we were to get rid of the old miserable expedient of coercion, and when we were to frame a new policy of conciliation. ["Hear, hear!"] The noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) says "Hear, hear!" and I should have cheered it if I had heard it; but how long did it last? It lasted till after the Elections, I admit. I will point out a case of inconsistency, showing how little seriously this House is apt to take Irish politics, and how much justification there is for the remark of the noble Lord that we make Ireland the battle-ground of English Parties, and that it is the root of all the mischief in our relations with that country. There was the question of extending the franchise in Ireland; but the Party opposite were no more united on that question than they were united on the question of renewing the Crimes Act. The noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill), who is the exponent of certain democratic principles which he occasionally professes always set a very high value on the legitimate expression of the legitimate wishes of the majority of the people of Ireland, bitterly reproached the hon. Member for Surrey (Mr. Brodrick) for wishing to exclude Ireland from the operation of the Franchise Act. That is another illustration of incoherency in policy which affects one side as much as the other, and which at present affects this no more the other side. I go back to this point—that the question to which hon. Members have to address their minds in deciding how they will vote is the question of how you will carry on the Government of Ireland; and our proposals are what, in our judgment, are the only proposals and framed on the only lines that make it possible that the Government of Ireland, under a free and representative system, can be carried on. Many predictions have been indulged in in this debate as to the disasters that would come upon Ireland from the establishment of a domestic Legislature in that country. Well, if we are to have a policy of conciliation it is rather a mistake, I think, to begin with a profound disbelief in it. If we are to enter on a path of peace, let us try and take the most hopeful view of peace. I do not myself believe, for a moment, that if a domestic Legislature were established in Ireland it would be that welter of religious and sectarian animosity that some hon. Members appear to imagine. I believe that Catholics and Protestants, when they found that they had to sit down together, would pretty soon find mutual respect for each other. I believe that Irish human nature is no worse, if it is no better, than other human nature, and that in such an Assembly there would grow up spontaneously instincts of Conservatism, and that some of those Gentlemen whom we are accustomed here to consider not exactly as the partizans of Conservatism might, perhaps, find themselves the heads of a truly Conservative Party. As to the danger of repudiation, of course that would exist. There is a danger of repudiation now. There is just as much danger of the repudiation of rent now, as there would be the danger then of the repudiation of what some hon. Gentlemen call a tribute as it is. I think there is no reason to suppose that Irishmen are less honest, or a less responsible people than any other that you are connected with. As the hon. Member for South Derry (Mr. T. M. Healy) has shown, it ought not to be forgotten that the repayment of loans by the humbler classes in Ireland has been most creditable. The payment of rent in Ireland, under the circumstances in which it has to be made, is a thing of which Irishmen have no reason to be ashamed. My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) spoke of one section of the population of Ireland as if it were different from the rest of Irishmen in being very industrious. Now, I would not say a word against the industry and skill of the North-East corner of Ireland; on the contrary, I think they deserve all our admiration and recognition. But the industry of the peasantry of Ireland, for all the hundreds of years they have been getting so little benefit from the land they till, has been as admirable a quality, and as persistent as that of Ulster or any other portion of the Kingdom. Therefore, I am not, Sir, going to admit that in constituting an Irish legislature you are going to have a collection of worthless "ne'er-do-wells." It may be that the Irish Assembly may not have the superfine manners which distinguish this Assembly, and that it may be a little ruder in its ways. I believe that it will be as capable of performing the duties of a Legislature with a spirit of justice and of competency for its purposes as any body of men that can be found. I may be asked why, if that is my opinion of Members from Ireland, I have always thought it a cardinal point of policy since this movement began that Irish Members should cease to sit in this Parliament. Well, Sir, the exasperation that has been produced by the unfortunate historical relations between Great Britain and Ireland has brought about a state of feeling which has alienated the sympathies of the Irish, and diverted their interests from the topics that interest us. They do not look at Imperial topics and interests from the same point of view as we do; they do not assist us in the manner in which it is essential that counsellors in this Parliament should at least endeavour to do. If our adjustment is successful, if, after some years of experiment, the result is what we desire and expect, it may then be possible enough that our Successors may invite Irish Representatives back again. But what I wish to insist on now is that those who have spoken to-night, and who spoke last night, who make a great point of having Irish Representatives in this Assembly are those who would refuse to Ireland a domestic Legislature. But what would the effect of that be? The effect of that would be, that you would have here a body of men who came in a spirit of irritation and resentment because a domestic Legislature had not been granted to them, and they would not easily forgive those who had baulked them. They would, therefore, come in a spirit of irritation and resentment deepened and heightened by what has happened now. If I were about to refuse a domestic Legislature to Ireland, I should be the more anxious to keep Irish Gentlemen away from this Assembly than I am as it is, because to insist upon keeping Irish Members here is to give to those whom you have irritated the best opportunity they could have, and the strongest position, for dealing the deadliest blow at Imperial policy, at the legislative business of this Island, and the authority and efficiency of this Parliament. Therefore, I am unable to understand the arguments of the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), who make it such a point in their policy that those whom they wish to refuse in their demands should remain here to be a source of mischief and dissension and inefficiency in our Parliament. I am not going to deal further with the question at this hour. I can only hope that what I have said may induce hon. Members on our own side and hon. Gentlemen opposite to recognize the responsibility of the judgment which they are about to pronounce. There can be no heavier responsibility. I am perfectly persuaded, and I believe that right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the opposite Bench do not differ from me, that there has never been a time when it was more urgently important that, if possible, a pacific settlement of the Irish problem should be arrived at. They may not wish to go along the same road. Some of them clearly do not; but if they recognize the force and the extent of the dangers that surround us, they will, at any rate, feel that the Motion of my right hon. Friend, if not supported, requires that an alternative policy should be put forward. They will be wise in their own interests if, even in anticipation of their own return to power, they shape that policy, not on the lines of repression, but of pacification and conciliation.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Lord Randolph Churchill.*)

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): Before that Motion is put, I beg to enter my protest against the hints and suggestions to assassination which the right hon. Gentleman—[*Cheers, and cries of* "Order, order!" *from the Irish Members.*] These hints and suggestions to the assassins of America——

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): Mr. Speaker, I rise to Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Motion is for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY: Well, this may be taken as my speech. ["Order!"] I say, Mr. Speaker, the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman will be interpreted—["Order, order!"]

MR. PARNELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to Order. I wish to submit to you whether the hon. Member for one of the divisions of Glasgow is entitled to address the House, on a Motion for the adjournment of the debate, on the merits of the Main Question?

MR. SPEAKER: I have already informed the hon. Gentleman that it is the Motion for the adjournment. The hon. Member is not in Order.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask you a question. [*Cries of* "Name!"]

MR. SPEAKER: The Question is, "That the Debate be now adjourned."

MR. MITCHELL HENRY: On that Motion, Sir—[*Cries of* "Name, name!"] I ask the indulgence of the House to permit me to make one observation. ["Name!"] I believe, Mr. Speaker, that I am entitled—[*Loud cries of* "Name!" *from the Irish Members.*]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not in Order. He will have an opportunity in the course of the debate of making any observations that he may please. The Question is that the debate be now adjourned.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

COPYHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—[BILL 26.]

(*Mr. Charles James, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Stafford Howard, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Mellor.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 1st April.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

VISCOUNT GRIMSTON (Herts, St. Albans): I beg to move the second reading of the following clause:—

> "But where an owner is entitled to lands which are intermixed with other lands not belonging to him, over which any person entitled as aforesaid as lord of the manor has any rights of hunting, shooting, fowling, chasing, or otherwise taking game, it shall not be lawful for the owner of any part of the land so intermixed and subject to any such sporting rights, to compel enfranchisement of such sporting rights."

It will not be necessary for me to repeat the arguments used on a previous occasion in regard to this Amendment. The Government have sanctioned it by the acceptance of its principle, and I trust they have not gone back from their position in the matter. I will simply move the addition of the clause.

New Clause, after Clause 33 add—

> "But where an owner is entitled to lands which are intermixed with other lands not belonging to him, over which any person entitled as aforesaid as lord of the manor has any rights of hunting, shooting, fowling, chasing, or otherwise taking game, it shall not be lawful for the owner of any part of the land so intermixed and subject to any such sporting rights, to compel enfranchisement of such sporting rights."—(*Viscount Grimston.*)

Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL (Mr. MELLOR) (Grantham): I should like this Amendment better if it applied entirely to moorlands. I do not think that in this Bill, which received such careful consideration at the hands of the Select Committee of last year, we ought to insert a clause of this kind, or that the Committee could agree to it as it is now drawn. If it is limited to intermixed land of one-quarter the quantity in the hands of the owner referred to, as was originally proposed, I think I may say, on behalf of the Government, that we could accept the proposal. I think it desirable that some such clause should be inserted in the Bill. Last year this measure was referred to a Select Committee, consisting of hon. Members from all parts of the House, amongst them being hon. Gentlemen who have seats in the present Parliament. I was a Member of the Committee myself, and every part of the Bill was carefully considered by us. Speaking, as I say, on behalf of the Government, I should be unwilling to see any part of the Bill seriously disturbed; but what the noble Lord is really asking for is, after all, a small concession. The cases that he contemplates are extremely rare; and I cannot think that the efficiency of the measure, which is a very important one, would be at all impaired by the adoption of this clause limited in the manner I have described. Unfortunately, this Bill, after having been carefully considered by a Select Committee, and after having passed this House, was thrown out in "another place." I am anxious that it should become law this year. I do not think that what the noble Lord has asked for can be said to affect the efficiency of the Bill, or the value of the clauses in it; and so far as the Government is concerned, and on the condition I have named, I do not propose to offer any further opposition.

Viscount GRIMSTON: I should be happy to restrict the clause to such lands as moorlands; but I do not quite understand the proposal that instead of the words I propose the owner of one-fourth should be entitled to enfranchise the sporting rights. Am I to understand it to be one-fourth of the entire area, or of the intermixed land?

Mr. C. H. JAMES (Merthyr Tydvil): I have considered this matter very carefully, and my opinion is that it would be satisfactory to put one-fourth in the Bill in the case of one man, and make it one-half in the case of several people joining in the possession of intermixed land.

Viscount GRIMSTON: I would ask the Committee to make it one-third in the hands of several persons, or one-fourth in the hands of one man. That is the least I could accept without a division. I think I must press for one-third.

Mr. ALLISON (Cumberland, Eskdale): I think one-third of the owners should be allowed to combine, for there may be a number of small owners. I think if the noble Lord agrees to allow copyholders to combine to the amount of one-third of the whole manor it will be a fair compromise.

The JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL (Mr. Mellor): I hope the noble Lord will accept the suggestion made. I know that he is anxious this Bill should pass into law. I think that the offer made on this side of the House is a reasonable and fair one. If he is disposed to accept it, it will be necessary that the clause should be withdrawn.

Viscount GRIMSTON: I will take a quarter in the hands of one owner. That is what was proposed by the hon. Gentleman at first, and that is the least I could take.

Mr. MELLOR: I have no objection to that. My hon. and learned Friend who has charge of the Bill has had great experience in these matters, and is well acquainted with copyholds in this country. He sees no objection to this. I would make this suggestion to the noble Lord—namely, that as the clause requires to be carefully redrafted it should be withdrawn on the present occasion so as to be brought up in an amended form on the Report stage.

Viscount GRIMSTON: That would render it necessary to go through the whole of this discussion again. We should require to sit up once more to a late hour, and, instead of doing that, I should be glad to accept the proposal of a quarter. I think that is a great concession, and I trust the Government will see their way to accept it.

Mr. ALLISON (Cumberland, Eskdale): This is a matter of great interest, especially to the district from whence I come. It is hard on small copyholders that they should be saddled with these manorial rights, which put them to such great inconvenience. You must remember that the smaller the number you now exclude from the operation of the Bill the greater difficulty there will be in time to come in getting these rights recognized. It is suggested to me that if the clause is framed as the noble Lord suggests you might have fresh legislation; but if you leave a very small number of persons outside this measure, you may leave them for all time saddled with manorial rights, which I believe, in the opinion of the House of Commons, are inequitable and unfair. I put it to the House that this new House of Commons does not show itself more tender of these rights than the unreformed House that sat last year. This clause was passed in the last House of Commons, it went before a Select Committee of the House, and it has been approved by the Incorporated Law Society. Having passed all these ordeals, I hope it will now be accepted in the form in which it stands. Certainly the small copyholders are anxiously expecting the passing of the clause, because their comfort and convenience in the occupation of their land very much depends upon it.

Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): I would suggest that my noble Friend should accept the proposal of the Judge Advocate General (Mr. Mellor), which seems a very fair one, and one which will certainly be more convenient to the Committee—namely, that the clause should be redrafted and brought up on Report.

Viscount GRIMSTON (Herts, St. Alban's): After this expression of opinion, I cannot do otherwise than accept the suggestion of the right hon. and learned Gentleman.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I think it would be better to report Progress, so that this clause might be brought up on Committee. Such a course would certainly facilitate the passing of the Bill.

MR. C. H. JAMES (Merthyr Tydvil): I think it would be better to bring up the clause on Report.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I do not see what objection can be raised to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson). There is no need to hurry in the matter. The clause must be redrafted, and as we are in Committee I think it would be well to remain in Committee. If the clause is brought up on Report, it is quite clear the Bill will have to be re-committed.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Tuesday* next.

House adjourned at One o'clock
till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 12*th April*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—Private Bills (Standing Order No. 128. No interest out of capital to be paid on calls under Railway Bills), *appointed.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Bankruptcy (Agricultural Labourers' Wages)* (70); Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order* (71).

Second Reading—Cape Race Lighthouse* (60); Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment (51).

Select Committee—Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 1) (25); Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 2) (40); Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 3) (48), *nominated.*

Committee—Trees (Ireland) (42-72); Marriages (Hours of Solemnization) (52-73); Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland) (36); Poor Relief (Ireland)* (66-74).

Committee—Report—Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (No. 2)* (58); Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment* (67).

Third Reading—Army (Annual) (55); Idiots* (65); Prison Officers' Superannuation* (61).

Viscount Grimston

TREES (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 42.)

(*The Lord President.*)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

THE EARL OF LIMERICK asked that certain modifications should be considered.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Earl SPENCER) said, that if the noble Earl wished to have the matter still further considered, it could be done on the Report stage of the Report.

LORD ASHBOURNE said, that, with the indulgence of the House, he would suggest that some provision should be made for the consideration of the landlord's interest in cases in which the Act was put in force. He thought that awkward precedents might be raised unless some provision was made to meet cases of indiscriminate tree planting.

Amendments made; the Report thereof to be received on *Thursday* next; and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 72.)

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

(*The Lord Sandhurst.*)

(NO. 55.) THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3ª."—(*The Lord Sandhurst.*)

In reply to Viscount BURY, to a Question respecting the Volunteers and the Capitation Grant,

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord SANDHURST) said, there was a great deal of information of different kinds on the subject at the War Office, and the way the Secretary of State intended to obtain his additional information was somewhat similar to that employed by the noble Viscount in 1879. A form had been issued, with columns for all the different items of expenditure that could be incurred. There were also three columns, with no headings, for expenses which might possibly have been overlooked. There were, of course, also columns for receipts, such as Capitation Grant and subscriptions, so that the Government might be able to judge how far income and expenditure balanced. The difference between the noble Viscount's plan and that of the Government was, that in the former Return certain expenses were classified as necessary, and the remainder as unnecessary. In the present Return the Government had made no such distinction. The Returns were to be sent in to the Secretary of State, and he would then consider what were necessary expenses in proportion to the growths of the requirements of the Volunteer Force, and how far they were met by the existing Capitation Grant. He might add that a Paper of Questions, desiring all sorts of information, suggestions, and reasons of difficulties, financial and otherwise, accompanied these Returns. One of the Questions related to the difficulties in obtaining officers, and if there were such difficulties, to what cause they might be attributed. The Return would be for the last five years. It was as full an inquiry into details of expenditure as could be made. It was the earnest wish of the Secretary of State to look into the question in all its bearings; and he had every hope that this Return and the answers to the Questions would enable him to come to a right conclusion as regarded the increase of the Capitation Grant.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 3^a, and *passed.*

MARRIAGES (HOURS OF SOLEMNIZATION) BILL.

(*The Lord Monk Bretton.*)

(NO. 52.) COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clause 1 (Hours for solemnization of marriages).

Lord MONK BRETTON said, that in order to meet a suggestion made by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Halsbury) on the second reading of the Bill, he would move, as an Amendment, to insert words providing that no person in Holy Orders should be subject to penalty or censure for solemnizing marriage beyond the canonical hours.

Amendment *moved,*

At end of the clause, add ("and no minister in holy orders of the Church of England shall be subject to any censure or penalty for solemnizing matrimony between the aforesaid hours of eight in the forenoon, and three in the afternoon.")—(*The Lord Monk Bretton.*)

Lord HALSBURY suggested the more general word "proceedings" in place of "censure."

Amendment *moved,*

To said proposed Amendment, to leave out from ("minister") to ("penalty"), and insert ("person shall be subject to any proceedings in any court, ecclesiastical or temporal") instead thereof.—(*The Lord Halsbury.*)

The Archbishop of CANTERBURY supported the Amendment.

Lord GRIMTHORPE said, the Amendment, as amended, was greatly improved, and he therefore hoped his noble Friend would accept it.

Lord MONK BRETTON said, he was quite willing to do so.

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

The Report of the Amendment to be received *To-morrow;* and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 73.)

GREAT BRITAIN—CULTIVATION OF TOBACCO.—QUESTION.

Lord HARRIS asked Her Majesty's Government, If they are now prepared to state what facilities will be given this year for the cultivation and preparation of tobacco in the United Kingdom? When he asked the Question the other day, the noble Lord opposite (Lord Sudeley) mentioned that the Government was waiting for the Report of the Royal Agricultural Society. He (Lord Harris) believed there were one or two Societies which were quite willing to make experiments, and he trusted that the noble Lord would be able to give such an answer as would encourage attempts to be made.

Lord SUDELEY (for the Treasury): The Government are willing to facilitate experiments in the growth of tobacco in the hands of responsible persons; but they are bound to guard the exercise of the power with certain restrictions, so that the experiments may be made without risk to the Revenue. The Government had hoped that before now the Royal Agricultural Society or some other kindred body or person interested in agriculture might have undertaken the experiments themselves, or have ascertained the names of fitting and responsible persons to carry out such experiments. In the event of that being done, the Authorities of the Inland Revenue will be prepared to give facilities to such persons under proper conditions. It would be impossible at present to give general licences to all the world; though, if the experiments should prove successful, the expediency of establishing a general system hereafter might be considered. The Government regret that the subject was not brought earlier under their consideration, as it is feared that the period of the season we have arrived at is somewhat late for this year; for whatever experiments might be made, in order to their thorough success, they ought to have been carried out somewhat earlier.

THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH said, he wished to say one word in justification of the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society. They had arrived at the decision which they did arrive at, because the experience of tobacco growth in Belgium which their Secretary was able to bring before them did not, in their judgment, justify them in applying any part of their funds to experiments of a like description at the present moment.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 1) BILL.

(No. 25.) (*The Lord Rayleigh.*)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

(No. 40.) (*The Viscount Bury.*)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (No. 3) BILL.

(No. 48.) (*The Lord Houghton.*)

Moved, "That the following Lords be named of the Select Committee:—

E. Cowper.
E. Camperdown.
L. Ashford.
L. Balfour of Burley.
L. Rayleigh.
L. Wigan.
L. Methuen.
L. Houghton.
L. Lingen.

agreed to (*The Lord Monson*).

Moved, "That the Lord Bramwell be named of the said Select Committee;" *agreed to* (*The Lord Wemyss*).

Moved, "That the Lord Wolverton be named of the said Select Committee;" *agreed to* (*The Lord Houghton*).

LORD GRIMTHORPE, in rising to move—

> "That all petitions presented before the 15th instant against these Bills be referred to the said Select Committee, and that the petitioners have leave to be heard before the Committee by their counsel, agents, and witnesses in support of the allegations of their petitions,"

said, he hoped that the Committee would not only be authorized, but instructed to adopt the course which he recommended. In 1882, no Committee of their Lordships had sat; but in the other House a Committee was appointed, and did all its work in eight days. It could hardly, therefore, be said that, if his Motion were adopted, the Bills would be much delayed. Witnesses were examined and counsel appeared before the Committee of the other House; and in all his long experience he had never known a case in which the evidence was so entirely in one direction, and the conclusion at which the Committee arrived in the other. Of course, all the Town Clerks were in favour of the claims of Corporations, and against those of the Companies; but he did not know what qualifications they had to give evidence on the subject. But men like Sir John Lubbock, the late Sir William Siemens, Mr. Spottiswoode, late President of the Royal Society, Sir Frederick Bramwell, and other eminent men gave evidence unanimously against the Compulsory Purchase Clause, as certain to be fatal to the development of electric lighting, and their evidence might as well have been given at Jerusalem. Four years' experience had proved that they were right, and that until new regulations were laid down there would practically be no public electric lighting. The noble and learned Lord concluded by making the Motion of which he had given Notice.

Moved, "That all petitions presented before the 15th instant against the said Bills be referred to the Committee, and that the petitioners have leave to be heard before the Committee by their counsel, agents, and witnesses in support of the allegations of their petitions."—(*The Lord Grimthorpe.*)

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN said, that the proposal of the noble and learned Lord to give all Petitioners against the Bills an absolute right to appear before the Committee by themselves or their counsel or agents would entirely place the Committee in the hands of such Petitioners. He felt bound to oppose it on the ground of the waste of time which would be caused if it were carried. He would suggest instead, that the Petitioners be left in the hands of the Committee, and for that purpose he would move to strike out all the words in the noble and learned Lord's Motion after the word "Committee," and to add in place thereof—

"And that the said Committee have leave to hear such petitioners as they may think fit by themselves, their counsel, agents, or witnesses, in support of the allegations of their petitions."

Amendment *moved*,

To leave out all the words after the first "Committee") and insert ("and that the Committee have leave to hear such of the petitioners as they think fit by their counsel, agents, and witnesses.")—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

Viscount BURY said, he thought that the scope of the inquiry ought to be limited in some way; but, at the same time, it was indispensable, in his opinion, that the Petitioners heard ought to have the assistance of counsel, for their Lordships would not be as fit as professional men to grapple with expert witnesses. The Government had so nominated the Committee as to have a majority on it; and he hoped the House would not leave them in the unfortunate position they would occupy, if counsel were not present to examine and cross-examine witnesses. Above all, they must take care to prevent the proceedings before the Committee degenerating into a Gas fight, when Gas Companies had no *locus standi*.

Lord BRAMWELL said, he agreed with the noble Earl who had moved the Amendment (the Earl of Camperdown) that, as the Motion stood, the Committee would be obliged to hear any Petitioners against the Bill, whether they had any *locus standi* or not. For instance, the Gas Companies might insist on calling witnesses, to show that it would be a hard thing for their shareholders if the Electric Light Bill passed. He, therefore, supported the Amendment, considering that, otherwise, the inquiry could not be satisfactorily conducted by the Committee.

The Marquess of SALISBURY said, he thought that the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Camperdown) had made out his case, that the words of the Motion were somewhat too stringent and peremptory for the purpose in view. On the other hand, the noble and learned Lord behind him (Lord Grimthorpe) had fairly shown that a thorough inquiry was necessary; because, otherwise, justice could not be done to the public in a matter where expectations had been disappointed. He thought that what was required was a form of words to signify that the House desired full scope for all *bonâ fide* Petitioners being heard, without depriving the Committee of some discretion in the matter, without which they would be placed in a most undignified position.

Lord GRIMTHORPE said, he was quite willing to amend his Motion in the manner suggested.

Lord HOUGHTON suggested, as a further Amendment, that the time for presenting Petitions against the Bills mentioned in the Motion should be the first day after the Easter Recess, instead of the 15th instant.

Amendment *moved*,

To leave out ("before the 15th instant") and insert ("on or before the first sitting day after the recess at Easter.")

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Earl Granville) said, he would remind their Lordships that the Government had been, originally, against the appointment of any Committee whatever upon the matter. However, a strong Committee had been appointed; and, while there had been an understanding that the Committee should not resort to a course of proceeding which would lead to a great delay, full discretion should, he thought, be left with them as to whom they should hear by counsel and witnesses. He, therefore, supported the Amendment. If the discretion was left them in one matter, surely it might be left in all.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Herschell) said, that the Bill was not one affecting individual rights; and, while his old prejudices and predilections would prevent him desiring unduly to limit the hearing of counsel, he did certainly think that it would not be well to pass a Resolution compelling the Committee to hear by counsel and witnesses everyone who petitioned against the Bill. It would be best to leave to the Committee discretion in the matter. There was no alternative between leaving a full discretion to the Committee as to the parties and the witnesses they should hear, or compelling them to receive whatever evidence should be tendered to them by persons whose only claim to be heard was that they had petitioned against the Bill. The latter course would lead to great waste of time, and be very unsatisfactory. If their Lordships had not sufficient confidence in the Committee for that purpose, they would do well to appoint another in which they had.

LORD HALSBURY supported the Amendment.

On Question, *agreed to.*

Motion, as amended, *agreed to.*

Ordered, That all petitions presented on or before the first sitting day after the recess at Easter against the said Bills be referred to the Committee, and that the Committee have leave to hear such of the petitioners as they think fit, by their counsel, agents, and witnesses.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER No. 128.)

(NO INTEREST OUT OF CAPITAL TO BE PAID ON CALLS UNDER RAILWAY BILLS.)

LORD HOUGHTON (for the Board of Trade), in rising to move—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether it is expedient to amend Standing Order No. 128 (which prohibits payment of interest during the construction of works), and that no Bill containing provision for payment of interest out of capital during construction of works be read a second time before the Report of the said Committee has been laid upon the Table,"

said, he would call their Lordships' attention to the fact that the Standing Order of the House of Commons had been altered so as to allow a Select Committee to give consent to the payment of interest in certain cases, and therefore it was desirable that there should be uniformity in the Standing Orders of the two Houses. It was a debateable question as to the policy of allowing interest to be paid, and he hoped that their Lordships would agree to its going to a Select Committee.

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether it is expedient to amend Standing Order No. 128, and, if so, in what respect; and That no Bill containing provision for payment of interest out of capital during construction of works be read a second time before the Report of the said Committee has been laid upon the Table."—(*The Lord Houghton.*)

Motion *agreed to;* and ordered accordingly.

SPORTING LANDS RATING (SCOTLAND) BILL.

(*The Earl of Elgin.*)

(NO. 36.) COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order.)

THE EARL OF WEMYSS asked, whether the Bill would put the law with regard to sporting rating in the same position in Scotland as that which existed in England?

THE EARL OF ELGIN, in reply, said, that he did not profess to be an authority upon the subject; but he had made inquiries with regard to this before moving the second reading, and he understood that in England sporting lands were rated whether they were let or not.

An Amendment made; the Report thereof to be received *To-morrow.*

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Fitzgerald.*)

(NO. 51.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD FITZGERALD, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that it had already passed the other House. The points of objection to it seemed to him to be rather matters for consideration in Committee than on the second reading, and if it would meet the views of their Lordships, he would post that stage until after the Recess.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Fitzgerald.*)

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said, he should not oppose the Bill, for he thought the position of the Irish labourer deserved their sympathy. He wished to point out that remedial legislation in Ireland had divorced the labourers from the land—that was, the Land Laws had been beneficial to the tenants, and not to the labourers. But, as regards the principle of the Bill, he wished their Lordships to look narrowly into it, for it had such names as those of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Mayne, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. Sheehy on its back; and, therefore, in Committee, he hoped they would carefully examine its provisions. In principle, the Bill was one of those Socialistic measures which enabled Local Authorities to purchase land at the expense of the ratepayers for the benefit of third parties, in this instance, to make largess of it to the labourers. It was an Irish Bill; but if passed for Ireland it would soon be extended to the rest of the United Kingdom. What was the Crofters Bill but an extension of the principle of exceptional legislation? Therefore, do not let them imagine, in dealing with this Bill, that it concerned Ireland only. Under the Acts of 1883 and 1885, everything was done by agreement; but, under this Bill, it would be compulsion. Not only that, but it also went a step in advance of the original Acts by proposing to grant as much as half-an-acre to each labourer. In Committee, he should move certain Amendments to the measure.

Lord ASHBOURNE said, he did not wish to enter in detail into the provisions of the measure, neither did he intend to oppose the second reading, because any Bill for the benefit of the labourer, or to improve his condition, would always receive the sympathetic attention of their Lordships. No doubt, as had been urged by his noble Friend (the Earl of Wemyss), in Committee, the Bill would receive full and careful attention. He could have wished, however, that the noble and learned Lord who had introduced it (Lord Fitzgerald) had entered more into detail, and it would have been well to point out that the Labourers Act had only been in operation for seven months. He (Lord Ashbourne) could well see that some of the provisions of the Bill would have to be scanned closely. There was, for instance, the definition of an "agricultural labourer." That was capable of very wide extension in Ireland, and care would have to be taken on the point. It would not be enough, for instance, that a farmer's son, after working one day as a labourer, should be in a position to go to the Sanitary Authority. He wished to point out that, in Ireland, where the people were very domestic, and there were very many families, there would be a tendency for the children of labourers to demand that farms all about them should be cut up into small plots or holdings for them, although some would, only, perhaps, have gained one day's wages for agricultural labour in the year. The clause with regard to "home farms" would also require some safeguards of restriction. These should not be interfered with, except under the pressure of great necessity; and there were some home farms so small—not exceeding 25 acres—which should not be interfered with at all. This was a point as to which the Bill required great amendment. As to allotments, he would remind the House that the first Act upon the subject was only passed in 1883, and the second —the Amendment Act—last August, and both were stated to be liberal and generous measures. Now, why was this Bill necessary only seven months after the Act of 1885, seeing there was not a suggestion yet that that Act had had a fair trial, or that it had not worked successfully? The Bill was so drawn that a Board of Guardians could apply the compulsory powers in the way of giving allotments to labourers with no house at all. He was as anxious as anyone to improve the condition of the labourer; but he would remind the House that there was no proof whatever that existing legislation for the purposes named in the Bill had failed, and that labourers had been generally met with refusals by their landlords to grant them land. Moreover, if land were granted in the manner proposed in the Bill to labourers having no resources, it might be managed in such a way as seriously to lessen the value of the property of other people. As, however, he was in favour of legislation having for its object to improve the *status* and surroundings of labourers, and to make their lives more happy and comfortable, he should be sorry to refuse to read a second time a Bill which avowed that object; only, having regard to the possible bearing of the stupendous legislation in reference to Ireland now being considered in "another place," he would suggest that the stage of Committee should be fixed for some date in May, say, the 15th.

The Earl of LIMERICK said, he would call their Lordships' attention to Section 14, which gave power to let any allotment on which a cottage was to be built temporarily while waiting for the erection of that cottage. In the previous Acts there was a limit of two years to the time within which houses might be built. There was no such limit in the present Bill, and he appealed to the Government to introduce one.

Viscount MIDLETON said, that, in his opinion, there were some enactments in the Bill which would be a fertile source of bad blood in Ireland. For instance, if it were passed, as it stood, it would be the easiest thing possible for any persons having grudges against landholders to take advantage of its provisions. He therefore thought that care should be taken to provide against any such contingency, by introducing safeguards requiring sites appropriated for the purposes of allotments to be placed conveniently, and so as not to interfere with the rights of other people. It would further be necessary, in his opinion, to introduce some limitation and definition of the word "labourer." The Bill had been carried through the House of Commons, for the most part, in the small hours of the morning; and some objections then taken to certain details were not fully considered.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said, he wished further to point out that, while the Bill laid down half-an-acre, allotments in England generally consisted of a quarter of an acre; and Sir John Lawes, an expert in these matters, maintained that a quarter of an acre was too much.

LORD FITZGERALD said, he begged to thank his noble Friends opposite for their assistance. He would give their objections the most serious consideration between then and the Committee stage, which he would fix for as late a date as possible.

Motion *agreed to:* Bill read 2ª accordingly.

PARLIAMENT—ADJOURNMENT—THE EASTER HOLIDAYS.

OBSERVATION.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Earl GRANVILLE): It may be convenient to your Lordships to know that, on Friday, subject to your consideration, I shall move the adjournment from that day to Thursday, 6th May, unless anything requiring the presence of a Royal Commission should arise.

House adjourned at a quarter past
Seven o'clock, till To-morrow,
a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 12*th April*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Leave*—Government of Ireland [*Third Night*], *debate further adjourned.*

Ordered — *First Reading* — Local Government Provisional Order (Aberavon and others) * [173]; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 2) (Borough of Bath and others) * [174]; Local Government Provisional Order (Poor Law) (Manchester and Hulme) * [172]; Local Government Provisional Order (Poor Law (No. 2) (Glinton and others) * [175]; Local Government Provisional Order (Poor Law) (No. 3) (Ashburnham and others) * [176]; Local Government Provisional Order (Poor Law) (No. 4) (Blandford-Saint-Mary and others) * [177]; Local Government Provisional Order (Poor Law) (No. 5) (Beaumont and others) * [178]; Local Government Provisional Order (Poor Law) (No. 6) (Marton-with-Moxby and others) * [179]; County Courts (Ireland) * [180].

Second Reading—Highways Acts Amendment * [149].

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS (TOWER HAMLETS, STEPNEY DIVISION).

MR. SPEAKER informed the House, that he had received from the Honourable George Denman and Sir William Ventris Field, two of the Judges selected for the Trial of Election Petitions, a Certificate and Report relating to the Election for the Stepney Division of the Borough of Tower Hamlets, and the same were read as follows:—

We, George Denman and William Ventris Field, being two of the Judges upon the rota for the trial of Parliamentary Election Petitions, having tried a Petition wherein Frederick Wootton Isaacson was the Petitioner and John Charles Durant the Respondent, and in which the said Petitioner claimed to be declared to have been elected by a majority of legal votes at the last Election for the Stepney Division of the Borough of the Tower Hamlets, hereby certify and report as follows:—

1. We certify that, at the conclusion of the Trial, we determined that the said John Charles Durant was duly returned and elected.

2. We report that no charge was made in the said Petition of any corrupt or illegal practice having been committed at the said Election.

In witness whereof we subscribe our names this 12th day of April, A.D. 1886.

GEORGE DENMAN.
WILLIAM V. FIELD.

And the said Certificate and Report were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

QUESTIONS.

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THE METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS—THAMES CROSSINGS.

Mr. RITCHIE (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) asked the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, Whether the Special Report of the Select Committee of 1884 on the Metropolitan Board of Works (Thames Crossings) Bill, recommending the construction contemporaneously of a low-level bridge at the Tower by the Corporation of the City of London and a subway at Shadwell by the Metropolitan Board of Works, has been considered by the Metropolitan Board of Works; and, if so, what decision has been arrived at by that Board on the subject; and, whether, looking to the fact that the Corporation of the City of London have already entered into a contract for the commencement of the low-level bridge in June next, the Metropolitan Board of Works have any intention of taking immediate proceedings to carry out that part of the scheme which the Select Committee of 1884 recommended should be undertaken by them, and which the Committee stated in their Report was immediately required?

The CHAIRMAN (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) (Middlesex, Hornsey): I should be glad, if it were possible for me within the limits of a reply to my hon. Friend's Question, to go into the history of the course taken by the Metropolitan Board with regard to Thames communications, and so to satisfy the House that the Board has not been unmindful of its responsibilities in the matter. My hon. Friend is aware that the Board have more than once promoted Bills for effecting communications; and I can assure him that the Report of the Committee of 1884 on the Metropolitan Board of Works (Thames Crossings) Bill has not failed to receive careful consideration from the Board. The Board have for a long time fully recognized the importance of providing further means of communication between the two sides of the river below London Bridge; and, having in previous years failed to obtain powers for a bridge or subway, made application to Parliament last year for power to establish free ferries at Woolwich and Greenwich. The powers for the Woolwich Ferry were obtained, and are now being exercised; but the ferry at Greenwich was abandoned, in consequence of certain onerous conditions which the Committee of the House of Lords sought to impose on the Board. No one knows better than my hon. Friend the great division of opinion which exists, not only as to the rival claims to consideration of bridge or subway, but also as to the precise points at which to establish them; and the Board have not yet decided that the position recommended by the Select Committee in 1884 is the best for a subway, or that a subway is preferable to a bridge. In fact, I may add that instructions have been given for the prosecution of inquiries to enable them to obtain information relative to an opening bridge between Old Gravel Lane and Union Road, Rotherhithe; and when these inquiries are completed the Board will have to consider the question of making the necessary application to Parliament.

Mr. RITCHIE: Will my hon. and gallant Friend tell the House how many abortive attempts at inquiry on the same subject have already been made by the Metropolitan Board?

Sir JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG: I did not hear what my hon. Friend said.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—RELIGIOUS STATISTICS OF PROMOTIONS.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is true that in county Waterford there is no Catholic Inspector attached to the police force; whether, in accordance with the return furnished to the Inspector General last January, the proportion of Catholics to Protestants stands as eight to one, and that notwithstanding this extraordinary difference since September, 1883, fourteen men in that county have been promoted to the rank of acting sergeant, eight of whom were Catholics and six Protestants; if it is true that the promotions made in March, when four vacancies occurred, two to the rank of sergeant and two to that of acting sergeant, three Protestants were selected as against one Catholic; and, can the principle on which these promotions are made be explained?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, it so happened that there were no Catholic Inspectors of Police in Waterford at the present time; but all the head constables, their immediate assistants, were Catholics. The proportion of Catholics to Protestants in the Police Force of the county was a little under four to one; and in the case of 19 vacancies occurring since the 1st of September, 1883, there had been promoted from the rank of acting-sergeant to sergeant 17 Catholics and two Protestants, and from constable to acting-sergeant 11 Catholics and eight Protestants. During the quarter which ended on March 31 last, three vacancies occurred in the rank of sergeant, to fill which two Catholics and one Protestant acting-sergeants were promoted, and one Catholic and two Protestant constables were advanced to acting-sergeant. The County Inspector reported that the principle by which he was guided in making promotions was to select the best and most deserving men, without reference to their religious opinions.

CHARITABLE TRUSTS—LEGISLATION.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Government propose to reintroduce the Charitable Trusts Bill, withdrawn in the last Parliament, with a view to the more effective administration of charitable funds in the Country?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I am afraid that I can give no pledge as to the reintroduction of this Bill; at any rate, before the Select Committee on the Endowed Schools Act has reported.

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS—KEW GARDENS.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the honourable Member for North West Staffordshire, Whether he has considered the propriety of removing the brick wall round Kew Gardens, in the Kew and Richmond Road; and, whether he is aware that local residents, anxious for this improvement, have offered to pay a *pro rata* contribution?

MR. LEVESON GOWER (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Stafford, N.W.): The question of the propriety of removing this brick wall has been repeatedly raised during the last 10 years, and has been considered by successive First Commissioners. The brick wall could not be removed without injury to the garden, and without exposing many of the valuable shrubs in it to the destructive effects of easterly winds and dust. Nothing is known at the Office of Works of any offer on the part of the inhabitants of Kew to pay a *pro rata* contribution towards the improvement, nor, in the circumstances I have mentioned, would such an offer affect the case.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS — LISTS OF VOTERS—ST. PANCRAS PARISH.

MR. BAGGALLAY (Lambeth, Brixton), asked the President of the Local Government Board, If he could state who was vestry clerk and clerk to the Directors of the Poor of the parish of St. Pancras during the year 1885, and who holds those offices at the present time; is it the duty of the clerk to the Directors of the Poor to prepare, on behalf of the Directors, the lists of voters for the Parliamentary borough of St. Pancras; if not, with whom does that duty rest; and, were such lists prepared in 1885, in the office of the St. Pancras Vestry and by clerks acting under the control of the clerk to the Directors of the Poor; if not, by whom and where were the lists of voters, in fact, prepared?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. STANSFELD) (Halifax): Mr. Gibbs was the Vestry Clerk and Clerk to the Directors of the Poor of the parish of St. Pancras during the year 1885, and these offices are held by him at the present time. From the information which I have received, I gather that the legal duty of preparing the lists of voters for the Parliamentary borough of St. Pancras devolves on the overseers, who are honorary officers. With regard to the preparation of the lists in 1885, the actual course adopted was, as I understand, this—the names of the persons who were qualified to be placed on the list of voters were marked in the rate book by the collectors. The overseers' list was corrected from the rate book thus marked, and this work was done in the offices of the Vestry by clerks and others specially employed and paid, some of whom were clerks on the regular staff. They were under the control of a chief clerk who, I am informed, has for 17 years past performed the duty of watching the annual list through the Press.

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)—THE FISHERMEN OF BALLANTRAE—DAMAGE TO NETS, &c., BY BEAM TRAWLERS.

Mr. WASON (Ayrshire, S.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to the large amount of damage done by beam trawlers to the nets and lines of the Ballantrae fishermen on the 27th of last month, whereby upwards of £60 worth of nets and lines were destroyed; and, what steps he intends to take for the protection of the property of these poor fishermen?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I have caused inquiry to be made into the matter dealt with in this Question, and I am informed that considerable damage was done to the nets and lines of the Ballantrae fishermen between Saturday the 27th and Monday the 29th ultimo, and that a number of trawling smacks were seen to pass over the spot where the nets and lines lay on the intervening Sunday. It appears that the fishermen are unable to identify the trawlers; and thus the statutory remedies provided by the Sea Fisheries Acts of 1883 and 1885, under which a prosecution may be brought against the offenders and damages recovered, cannot be put in force. The case of the fishermen is a very hard one; and it is to be regretted that the absence of evidence prevents the effective remedies now provided by statute from being available.

POOR LAW (SCOTLAND)—DEATH FROM EXPOSURE OF ANN MACKINNAN, AT DERRAIG, ISLE OF MULL.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the Lord Advocate, If his attention has been called to the circumstances in connection with the death of Ann Mackinnan, a pauper 84 years of age, whose body was found on the road side, near the village of Derraig, in Mull, on the morning of the 7th of February; if the deceased was in receipt of a parochial allowance of only eleven shillings and sixpence per month; if there is reason to believe that the said Ann Mackinnan died in a state of destitution; if the body of the deceased was removed and buried at a place nine miles distant from Derraig, by the order of the inspector of the poor, without any legal investigation into the cause of death; and, if he will order a full inquiry to be made?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): My attention has been called to the circumstances connected with the death of Ann Mackinnan. She was 83 years of age, and a pauper on the roll of the parish of Kilninian and Kilmore. She lived in a small cottage at Aintuim, along with another pauper, and received house, fuel, and clothing from the Parochial Board, in addition to a sum of £2 10*s.* per annum. She spent part of the afternoon of Saturday, the 6th February, at the farmhouse of a Mrs. Whyte, where she had tea, and left for home, about a mile distant, about 6 o'clock, taking a lighted peat with her as a lantern. The night was dark and stormy, but the road was level and good, and the Whytes had no fear of her reaching home in safety, as she was in usual health and quite able to walk the distance. Unfortunately, she appears to have missed her way, as she was found dead the next forenoon about 200 yards below the road, and midway between her own house and the Whytes' farm. From the inquiry which was made by the Fiscal, there does not appear to be any ground for the view that she died in a state of destitution. She was buried at the instance of the Inspector of Poor on the 8th. It is true that no medical examination took place, as the doctor was from home, and the body had been sent for interment at Kilninian, seven miles off, before he could attend. When he did come it was not thought necessary to exhume it, the death having been clearly due to accidental exposure; and I cannot say that the authorities acted wrongly in the circumstances.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—DISTRICT INSPECTOR DUNNE, CO. MONAGHAN.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it the fact that District Inspector Dunne, Royal Irish Constabulary, of Monaghan, a Catholic officer, who has given complete satisfaction to all parties in the town, has been ordered to Bailieboro, in order that he may be replaced by an Episcopalian; is the Inspector of the latter persuasion; and, what is the reason of the change?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): In accordance with the requirements of the Public Service, District Inspector Dunne was about to be transferred from Monaghan to Bailieboro'; but arrangements had already been made by which he would be replaced by an officer of the same religion as himself.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY — THE POLICE BARRACK AT KILLEAGH, CO. CORK.

MR. LANE (Cork Co., E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the constabulary authorities intend to surrender the barrack now occupied by the police stationed at Killeagh, in the county Cork; and, if so, for what reason, and upon whose recommendation has the change been decided on; whether the police have occupied the present barrack for over thirty years; and, whether the landlady of the premises expended a large sum of money in extending them in accordance with an agreement made with Sir John Wood in 1874?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that no decision had yet been arrived at regarding the police barrack in Killeagh. The County Inspector reported that the house was in a wretched condition. The repairs made in 1874 were amply recouped by an increase of rent. The letting was terminable at three months' notice.

MUNICIPAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS—POST OFFICE SERVANTS.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) (for Viscount CRANBOURNE) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If the regulation laid down by the late Postmaster General is still in force, by which Post Office officers are prohibited from taking any active part in the preparations for, or conduct of, Municipal and Parliamentary Elections?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): In reply to the right hon. Gentleman, I have to state that there is no Regulation prohibiting Post Office servants from taking part in parochial or municipal elections. As regards Parliamentary elections, the Regulation of the late Postmaster General is still in force.

JUDICATURE ACT (IRELAND)—COURT FEES.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Can he explain why it is that, notwithstanding the Judicature Act, the officers of the Irish Queen's Bench Division charge two shillings for each copy of an Order, regardless of length, while in all the other Divisions only four pence a folio is charged; and, how are the fees accounted for?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I am informed that in the Queen's Bench Division the fee of 2*s.* is charged on orders issued by the Queen's Bench Division, and the charge of 4*d.* a folio is charged for copies of documents attested by the officers of the Court. I am unable to account for the difference of practice in the different Courts; but I understand that the matter will be brought before the Lord Chief Justice on the first opportunity. The fees are paid by means of stamps, and are accounted for by the Inland Revenue Department.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS — THE RATHDRUM BOARD OF GUARDIANS —CASE OF PETER GIBSON.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the cottage of Peter Gibson, an agricultural labourer, was some time ago reported on by the medical officer of health as being wholly unfit for human habitation; whether, recently, Gibson's family has been attacked with fever, from which one of his children died; whether Gibson's application for a cottage under the Labourers Acts was twice before the Board of Guardians at Rathdrum; and, what is the reason it was refused?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that he was informed that the man lived rent free in a most unsanitary house, and that he was offered a cottage close by, at a moderate rent, but refused it. Lord Carysfort had undertaken to build whatever cottages were required on his estate at rents less than the Guardians could give them; and, under these circumstances, the Guardians did not feel justified in providing cottages at the expense of the ratepayers.

Mr. W. J. CORBET asked, if Lord Carysfort accompanied the offer with conditions which the people would not accept; and, whether the action of the Guardians in not carrying out the Labourers Act was dictated by the *ex officios* against the wishes of the elected Guardians?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I am not aware of the circumstances; but the hon. Member must be aware that it would not be in the power of the Local Government Board to compel the Guardians in the matter.

ARMY (PENSIONERS)—CASE OF JOHN GORMAN, OF MALLOW.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to the case of John Gorman, of Mallow, a pensioner from the 19th Foot, who was discharged invalided after more than nineteen years' service, in consequence of the bite of a scorpion in Demarara; whether, from 1848 to 1870, he served in the local Reserve, and, according to the certificate of Dr. Parsons Berry, was attacked while on duty in that corps by cold and inflammation of the eyes, which terminated in total blindness; whether Gorman is now an old man of seventy-six years, blind and lame, dependent for the necessaries of life upon the ten pence a day he receives in respect of his services in the 19th Foot; and, whether, having regard to his age, poverty, and helplessness, and to his forty-four years' service in that regiment and in the Reserve, he will receive the small additional allowance made to persons who get invalided while embodied in the Reserve?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Herbert Gladstone) (Leeds, W.) (who replied) said: If the pensioner Gorman can produce satisfactory evidence that he was disabled by reason of his service with the Enrolled Pensioners he should submit it to the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, who have power to deal with such cases.

NAVY—TORPEDO BOATS.

Mr. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If he can inform the House the number of first and second class torpedo boats attached to ships in the Mediterranean and Channel Squadrons (independent of the *Hecla* torpedo depôt ship), and also the number of first and second class torpedo boats now in the Home Ports available for service?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): I would appeal to my hon. Friend not to press for the information asked for in this Question. Without any undue desire to maintain absolute secrecy in these matters, I cannot think there would be any practical advantage in publishing the exact number of torpedo boats attached to the Mediterranean and Channel Squadrons, and as to those available for service at the home ports. My hon. Friend must be aware that the number will, for some time, be a fluctuating one, owing to the additions which are now being rapidly made to this branch of the Service.

NAVY—H.M.S. "ALBATROSS"—EXPLOSION OF A NORDENFELT GUN.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether any information has arrived with reference to the reported bursting of a Nordenfelt gun on board H.M.S. *Albatross;* and, whether the accident was due to carelessness or faulty manufacture in the gun?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): It was reported, by telegram received from China on March 26, that the accident to the Nordenfelt gun on board the *Albatross* was the result of carelessness, and did not arise from any defect in the gun.

LIGHTHOUSES—REGULATIONS, JANUARY 29.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If his attention has been called to an order, issued on the 29th January, forbidding reading, writing, or handicraft work during their watches, to all lighthouse keepers, and whether such a rigid rule is necessary; and, whether it would be possible to relax the regulation?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND) (Cornwall, Launceston) (who replied) said: The Board of Trade never interfere in matters of discipline with the Lighthouse Authorities; our contról is only financial. But if we are asked to give an opinion, we should say that it is of the utmost importance that lighthouse keepers should, during their night watches, give their undivided attention to the light which has been confided to their charge, and on which life and property depends. The lighthouses in Scotland are under the management of the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, who make such regulations as they deem necessary for public safety.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—EMIGRATION OF ORPHAN AND DESERTED CHILDREN.

MR. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he can inform the House how many orphan and deserted pauper children have been emigrated to Canada under the conditions set forth in the Memorandum of the Local Government Board of 30th April 1883, and how many of those children have done well, and the reverse; whether the Local Government Board are prepared to recommend or assent to the further emigration of similar children under similar conditions; generally, whether the Local Government Board are satisfied with the results of such aforesaid emigration of children, and are prepared to continue and extend the same, and to make their tentative assent to the conditions contained in the said Memorandum of 30th April 1883 now absolute; whether the Local Government Board have drawn up any further rules and regulations governing the emigration of suitable poor adults and children by Boards of Guardians under the Poor Law Acts; and, whether, under the present exceptionally distressed condition of the Country, the Local Government Board will consider the advisability of at once drawing up or extending such rules and regulations, in order to promote and facilitate the emigration of such suitable poor persons before they have become actual paupers?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. STANSFELD) (Halifax): The Board have authorized, since the issue of the Memorandum referred to, the emigration of 481 children —namely, 130 in 1883, 277 in 1884, and 74 in 1885. When the Board agreed, in 1883, to consent to the emigration of orphan and deserted children, it was only on the understanding that an annual inspection would be made by the immigration officers of the Department of Agriculture, or other persons authorized by the Minister of that Department, and that the Reports would be collected and forwarded as soon as possible. The Board, in March, 1885, received Reports with regard to 26 children, and those Reports were generally favourable, but these are the only Reports which the Board have received; and having regard to the difficulty which is experienced in obtaining accurate information from the officers of the Canadian Government as to the children sent out, the Board have been obliged to consider whether they must not now withhold their consent to the emigration of any additional children, and they are in communication with the Colonial Office on the subject. The Board have not prepared any special rules as to the emigration of adults and children at the cost of the rates, neither do they deem it necessary to issue any special Regulations on the subject. Every application which the Board receives is dealt with; and there is nothing in the Statutes, or in the practice of the Board, which would in any way interfere with the Guardians defraying from the rates the cost of the emigration of poor persons before they become paupers.

LAW AND POLICE—TREATMENT OF PRISONERS, DURHAM.

MR. MILVAIN (Durham) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the fact that batches of prisoners from the various boroughs and petty sessional divisions of the county of Durham are at intervals during each day marched handcuffed, and sometimes in chains, through the streets of the city of Durham, from the railway station to the county gaol, a distance of about a mile; and, if so, as the practice is a subject of annoyance to the inhabitants, he will take into his consideration the advisability of providing a police van for that purpose?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that I have received a Report from the Chief Constable of Durham, who informs me that on an average 20 prisoners are marched daily through the streets of Durham, not in chains, but frequently handcuffed. The Home Office is not responsible for the proper conduct of prisoners to gaol. This duty rests with the County Authorities. I have accordingly written to the Chairman of Quarter Sessions saying that, in my opinion, it is desirable that a police van should be supplied, in order to put an end to the present practice.

LAW AND POLICE—SUNDAY TRADING IN THE EAST OF LONDON.

MR. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the enormous extent of Sunday trading at Stratford atte Bow, and in the East of London generally, in violation of the Act of Charles the Second and other statutes of the realm; and, if so, whether he will direct the police to institute such prosecutions as may be necessary to secure the suppression of such Sunday trading, and the better observance of the Lord's Day?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): In reply to my hon. Friend, I have to say that I have obtained a Police Report, from which it appears that Sunday trading, chiefly on the part of butchers and greengrocers, does prevail to a considerable extent in Stratford and other poor districts in the East of London. I am not led to believe that the practice is increasing, and no complaints have been made with respect to it. In the absence of any such complaints, and of any application under 34 & 35 *Vict.* c. 87—which restrains the operation of the Act of Charles II.—the Police Authorities do not feel called upon of themselves to institute proceedings under the last-mentioned Act, which is the only Act applicable to the locality.

ARMY—GRIEVANCES OF QUARTERMASTERS.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, If any steps will be taken to remedy the grievances of Army Quartermasters, mentioned in the pamphlet on *The Grievances of Army Quartermasters, by the Wife of a Quartermaster*; and, considering that the duties required of the Departmental Officer, on whom the official title of "Quartermaster" has been conferred, are in no way analogous to the duties of Army Quartermasters, whether some other official title will be substituted for the present one, which causes so much dissatisfaction to the officers concerned?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): My attention has not been particularly directed to the pamphlet in question; but suggestions have been made in certain quarters for alteration in some particulars of the Rules affecting Army Quartermasters, and these suggestions are being considered. I am advised that the title referred to in the latter part of the Question does not constitute a real grievance.

ARMY—CHELSEA HOSPITAL—ARMY PENSIONERS.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether a Petition has been received by the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital from a number of pensioners living at Callan, county Kilkenny, praying for an increase of pension on the grounds that they are prohibited, by order of the National League, from obtaining Civil employment; and, if so, what steps it is proposed to take in order to prevent these loyal and well disposed persons and their families from becoming destitute?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Sterling, &c.): Such a Memorial has been received by the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital. I must remind the hon. Gentleman that the Commissioners can only award pensions for military service. As regards the peculiar grounds for being assisted which are stated in the Question, Army pensioners are not on any different footing from other subjects of Her Majesty.

PORTUGAL—ARREST OF MISSIONARIES IN MADEIRA.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, If he will cause inquiry to be made of British Consul at Madeira as to the truth of a report that certain missionaries, supposed to be British subjects (Messrs. Wright and Mellin), have been arrested by the Portuguese authorities at Madeira for "preaching the Gospel," and committed for trial; and, if the said report should prove to be correct, he will give instructions with a view to their protection, and cause representations to be made in the proper quarter to ensure their release from custody?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): This case was reported to the Foreign Office by the Evangelical Alliance on April 2, and Her Majesty's Consul at Funchal was forthwith directed to inquire into the facts and report thereon. Should it appear that the statements made in the Question of the hon. and gallant Member are well founded, representations will at once be addressed to the Portuguese Government with a view to obtaining the release of the missionaries.

SOLVENCY OF THE IRISH CHURCH FUND.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, considering that the following sums (as stated by the Secretary to the Treasury) are now charged on the Irish Church Fund—

	£
Loans outstanding . . .	7,603,044
In Teachers' Superannuation Fund	1,300,000
Royal University £20,000 per per annum capital value, say	600,000
Total about . .	£9,500,000

and considering the great depreciation of landed property in Ireland and elsewhere, he can hold out any reasonable hope that the Irish Church Fund is solvent and able to bear both existing guaranteed liabilities and any other liabilities which may be imposed on it by Acts already passed or now submitted to Parliament by Her Majesty's Government, so as to avoid the imposition of a burden on the taxpayers of the Country under the guarantee?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.) (who replied) said: The income of the Church Fund, although there have been several bad years since the Disestablishment took place, has hitherto provided regularly for the charge imposed upon it, a large proportion of which consists of the Terminable Annuity, by which the debt is being gradually repaid, and a considerable margin has been left for further redemption of debt. These remarks apply to the year which has just expired. I am, therefore, justified in saying that, in the opinion of the Treasury, the Church Fund is solvent.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL asked whether, in answering the Question, the hon. Gentleman had regard to all obligations under the existing Act of Parliament?

Mr. HENRY H FOWLER said, the Fund was solvent in reference to the liabilities already imposed upon it; but he could not say anything about the future.

INLAND REVENUE—ASSISTANTS OF EXCISE.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he is aware that there are now over 500 Assistants of Excise who at the present rate of promotion in their department will probably serve from seven to ten years without any increase of salary; and, if so, whether any improvement in their position is contemplated?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): There are about 430 second class Assistants of Excise and 335 first class. The average length of time which it takes for a second class Assistant to become a first class Assistant, and for a first class Assistant to obtain promotion into the class next above him, is, in each case, about two and a-half years. No improvement in their position is contemplated.

FISHINGS AND FORESHORES (SCOTLAND)—THE RETURN.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, When the Return relating to fishing privileges on the Coast of Scotland, granted on the 6th of February, will be laid upon the Table?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Return in question is a long one; but I am informed, in answer to my inquiries on the subject, that it will be presented after the Easter Recess.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE DEBATE ON "GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND."

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): Sir, we understood from the Prime Minister the other day that great public inconvenience would be caused if the debate on this Motion was prolonged over this evening. I need hardly say we have no desire whatever that any inconvenience should be caused. Assuming, therefore, that the debate is concluded to-night, and leave given to bring in the Bill, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman when the Bill will be circulated to hon. Members—whether it will be circulated to-morrow morning; and, if not, when?

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): On the same subject, Sir, I wish to say that the debate has as yet been carried on by the two Front Benches, and by eminent Gentlemen who have been anxious to define their position—that position being one of hostility to the Bill. There are a considerable number of Gentlemen in this part of the House who are also anxious to express their opinions; and, therefore, I hope that the Prime Minister will not agree to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. I ask the Prime Minister whether he will be good enough to consider the inadvisability of agreeing to the suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman to bring the debate to an end this evening?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): In the course of the day—I have not had any knowledge of the appeal just made by my hon. Friend—certainly I have received information which assures me that it is impossible, in a Parliamentary sense of the word, to bring this debate to a close to-night. That being so, I hope it will be found practicable to conclude it to-morrow. That is as far as I am justified in expressing a hope. There are two things that I consider to be—again in a Parliamentary sense—almost essential. First of all, that the Budget should not be postponed until after Easter, it being a late Easter. That, I think, would be extremely undesirable. And, secondly, that I should likewise have an opportunity of introducing the scheme of the Government with respect to land. I consider that it is almost a matter of honour on our part that we should place before the House the whole of our policy, which is not before the House at this moment. That is the exact position in which we stand. The days available are to-morrow—and to-morrow I assume to be disposed of—Thursday, Friday, and Monday; and there are these two serious matters which I think it is really necessary to dispose of on two of these three days.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my Question. Assuming that leave be given to bring in the Bill to-morrow, when will it be printed?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I beg pardon. I do not think the Bill can possibly be circulated to-morrow. As far as I am aware, I cannot give a positive answer. Having seen the draft of the Bill in a mature state this afternoon. I should hope that it may be circulated on Wednesday morning, if leave is given to-morrow night; but I cannot speak positively.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Will the Budget or the Land Purchase Bill be introduced on Thursday?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: The Budget on Thursday, presuming the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill closes to-morrow. Subsequently the right hon. Gentleman said: In the event of our closing the debate to-morrow night, and of my right hon. Friend being able to make his Budget speech on Thursday, I do not think that the difference between having the Land Question on Friday or on Monday would be sufficient to warrant interference with the general course of Business. In that case, I should propose to make the statement relating to the Land Question on Monday next.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will consider a little further on that point; because it is obvious that, if the statement is made on Monday, it will be impossible to debate it at such length as is desired. The debate on the Government of Ireland Bill, as we see, is now going on for four nights.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir; but the condition of time must be borne in mind. The draftsmen of the Government have been extremely hard pressed in the preparation of the Irish Government Bill. I must have in view the condition of their labours with reference to the production of the Land Bill. I have grave doubts as to whether I can make any further arrangement.

Mr. FINCH-HATTON (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I beg to remind the right hon. Gentleman that he originally intended to introduce the Land Purchase Bill on Thursday.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I must point out that it is absolutely impossible for me to predict what precise progress will be made by the draftsmen on the Bill. So far as I am concerned, I shall be prepared to go on with the Land Bill on Thursday.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—MEMBER'S SEATS IN THIS HOUSE.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I wish, Sir, to ask your ruling in reference to the taking of seats in this House. I wish to know whether it is possible for a Member who has been down to the House early and deposited his hat upon a seat, to leave the precincts of the House for a short time, in order to cross the road to get luncheon, without finding, on his return to the House, that the hat which he had deposited had been taken away and his seat appropriated by some other hon. Member?

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Before you reply to the hon. Member I should like to ask, Sir, whether it is not the fact that whether a Member leaves the precincts of the House for a long or short time, or for luncheon or anything else, by doing so he forfeits any seat he may have previously taken? If that were not so, an hon. Member would be able to come down here at 9 o'clock in the morning, and, having deposited his hat, might go away, and not come back again until the Sitting of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: It would be very difficult for me to lay down the Rule more explicitly than I have done. The matter is one which is regulated by the mutual courtesy of hon. Members; but I may say again that I do not consider, if a Member merely places his hat on a seat and then leaves the House entirely, that he is entitled to that seat. But if after having placed his hat upon a seat he leaves the House for the purpose of attending a Committee upstairs, I should not consider that that was leaving the precincts of the House. I do not know that I can state the Rule in a more explicit form.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars) asked the Prime Minister whether he could now answer his Question with regard to the appointment of a Committee to consider the question of the enlargement of the House?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): It is true I did promise to give an answer today; but I am by no means certain whether the House would feel itself in a condition to determine at this moment, after the considerable number of Committees already appointed, to deal with this question. But I may say that we have no objection in principle to a Committee on the subject.

MR. HOWELL AND MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): My attention has been called to some words uttered by me with respect to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Whitehaven. I beg to state that I used those words under a misapprehension, and inadvertently. I beg to withdraw the charge then made, and to apologize to the right hon. Gentleman for having given him any pain whatever.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): After the explanation given by the hon. Member for Bethnal Green, I beg to say that I am entirely satisfied, and my Friends, who know that the charge was made without foundation, will also share my feelings on the subject.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.] [THIRD NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [8th April],

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the provision for the future Government of Ireland."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Mr. Speaker, I am profoundly sensible that it would be utterly impossible for me to attain in any degree whatever to the unequalled elevation of argument and eloquence with which the Prime Minister initiated this debate on Thursday afternoon, and at which, I think, it has been maintained by the speeches of the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Hartington) and by the right hon. Gentleman who sits below the Gangway (Mr. Chamberlain). Moreover, Sir, I do not think that it would be at all within my power to make even a decent approximation to that altitude unless I were favoured with the more than usually liberal and kind indulgence and patience of the House of Commons—an indulgence which hitherto it has been my extreme good fortune never to have asked for in vain. Sir, I do not believe that if the youngest Member of this House were to live as long as the oldest Member of this House, and were during all that long period to have a seat in Parliament—I doubt whether he would ever be called upon to consider matters more momentous than those which are now before the House of Commons. A debate upon the relations—harmonious or otherwise — which exist, or which ought to exist, between races, between peoples, and between nations, cannot fail to be of a character most interesting and most exciting. It belongs, I think, essentially to the highest order of topics which can by any possibility come under the notice of a free Parliament; it ought, I think, to be approached with unlimited caution, and after exhaustive study. A debate of that kind is seldom indulged in without a large admixture of passion and of prejudice. But, Sir, if these forces can to any considerable extent be eliminated, then I am of opinion that the prospect of obtaining or arriving at a peaceful solution of the problems that may be raised are brighter and more assured. Sir, so far as I am concerned, and in the observations which I will endeavour to put before the House of Commons, I will be guided entirely by that view. Nor will I seek, by any words of mine, to lay myself open to any reasonable accusation of having added, even by so much as a drop, to the cup of prejudice and passion which on either side of the House it might not be difficult, under certain circumstances, to cause to overflow. I will also be guided mainly, and as far as I can, by an observation which fell from the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) on Friday night—that it was the duty of the English Parliament and the English people to approach these proposals in a spirit of prudence and inquiry; and, moreover, I most readily respond to the appeal of the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant on Friday night, as to the inutility at present of any recriminations about the past, and as to the advisability of doing what he calls passing a Constitutional amnesty for the purposes of this debate. Therefore, Sir, as far as I am concerned, I want to be perfectly willing to treat everything which occurred up to Thursday night as to what he calls "old history"—perhaps with only one exception. I want to bring before the House an extract from the speech of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) which was made recently. The House will recollect that on Friday night the noble Marquess opposite, in a speech which it would be perfectly presumptuous for me to pass any opinion upon, so impressed was the House with it, took up a strong Constitutional attitude, and denied the moral right of the present House of Commons to consider the proposals such as the Prime Minister has laid before us. The House will, I think, be startled to know that on this Constitutional position the hon. Member for the City of Cork is in complete accord with the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Hartington). I may say in complete accord with the noble Marquess, because the hon. Member for the City of Cork, whatever else may be said of him, is rarely inconsistent in his utterances in explanation of the position he takes up. Therefore, I would ask the House to hear what was the opinion of the hon. Member for the City of Cork on the 10th of November last, speaking at a meeting at Liverpool that day with regard to the Constitutional rights of the House of Commons. The hon. Member, as reported in *The Times*, was alluding to a speech the Prime Minister had made in Mid Lothian, when he expressed his doubts as to the desirability of the Liberal Party, or of any Party, touching this question, except in connection with a majority. The hon. Member for the City of Cork said—

> "Under the circumstances, it appeared to him that the House of Lords would only be carrying out their Constitutional right of rejecting a Bill, the details of which had not been before the country at the General Election. Mr. Gladstone could avoid all this trouble by bringing his great intellect to the promotion of a Constitutional course. He invited him to lay his views as to the largest amount of self-government for Ireland, subject to the condition he had stipulated regarding the supremacy of the Crown and the maintenance of the unity of the Empire, before the public, in order that the electors of the Three Kingdoms might have an opportunity of judging on them, and passing a decisive verdict at the General Election."

I hope the House will not think I was doing wrong in passing away from the one rule I had laid down for myself, and bringing before the House the most remarkable fact that the hon. Member for the City of Cork—who certainly is no mean Constitutional authority—is in complete and perfect accord with the position taken up by the noble Marquess opposite on Friday night. Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to weary the House by any close examination of the details of this measure, because I do not think that any such examination would be at all suitable to a first-reading debate; because, in the second place, there is so much, even after the marvellous exposition of the First Lord of the Treasury, which is left in doubt and mystery; and, in the third place, I must say that after consideration and reconsideration of the Prime Minister's speech, I am led irresistibly to the conclusion that the scheme now before the House appears, so far as I am informed, to involve such a complicated, such an inextricable, such a multitudinous mass of contradictions and absurdities, that I feel quite certain if it had not been proposed to the House on the high and illustrious authority of the First Lord of the Treasury, it would not have been for one moment seriously considered. It is, of course, possible that when the measure comes to be printed and circulated it may look somewhat better, and the details may appear more symmetrical and intelligible than they do now. Under that reservation I would make a few criticisms. At the first sight certain things do, undoubtedly, appear very clear. There are to be found in this Bill, by a careful student, a great quantity of what I must call fanciful and eccentric guarantees and safeguards. I own I was a little astonished and somewhat alarmed by the apparent light-hearted acquiescence of the Irish Party in the guarantees and safeguards. The attitude of the Irish Party—so far as it has been represented hitherto—reminded one of the, perhaps, well-known story of Theodore Hook. When he went up to the University to be matriculated he is said to have been asked by the Vice Chancellor if he was prepared to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. "Certainly," replied Theodore Hook, "40 if you will." That extraordinary manifestation of frivolity to some extent discomposed the University authorities. I take, as an illustration of those safeguards and guarantees, a very remarkable example. I would draw the attention of the House to the proposed composition of the new Irish Parliament. It is proposed by the Prime Minister that the new Irish Parliament shall be composed of two Orders of Members, elected by different constituencies. I have taken a great deal of trouble since Thursday night to consult the highest authorities I could get access to; and I believe I am right in saying that if you search ancient and modern history through and through, you will find no precedent in all the records of Constitutional Government for such a proposal as is now made to the House of Commons. ["Oh!"] Well, there is, perhaps, one precedent; but I doubt whether it is one which will be at all flattering to the dignity of the Irish Parliament. There is a Synod of the Disestablished Church in Ireland that does, I believe, consist of two Orders, acting separately, and at times together. But, first of all, I do not think there is any connection or any analogy between a Disestablished Church and a deliberate and elective Assembly. Secondly, I have the authority of a distinguished member of the Synod for stating that the separation of the two Orders leads to the most constant deadlock and the most endless and protracted discussion. However, the first Order in this new Parliament is intended by the First Lord of the Treasury specially to represent property; and it is a remarkable thing, and one well worthy of the notice of the Members of the Radical Party below the Gangway, that the Leader of the great Liberal Party—a Leader who certainly approximates on many occasions to the more advanced tendencies of that Party—should at this time of day propose for the constitution of a Representative Assembly so reactionary and so discarded a machinery as property qualifications. I would also point out to the House, in passing, that the peculiar rating and property qualification which is proposed for the electors does not necessarily protect the Protestant minorities. I have it on high authority that I can trust that there are many hundreds of the farmers of Ulster who would not be entitled to vote for the Order which is specially to represent the minority; whereas there would be hundreds of the cattle graziers of Limerick, Cork, Tipperary, and Meath who would vote for the Order which is specially intended to represent the minority. This is a matter of no considerable moment; but I think it is worth mentioning. The second Order of the proposed House of Commons certainly does not represent property; and the arrangement is that these Orders are to sit and vote together, but that either Order can at any time demand separate voting, and that either Order can veto the action of the other Order. May I be allowed to put that into operation? I suppose the meeting of the Irish Parliament, and I test this curious arrangement on three points. I take first the election of the Speaker. Obviously, the election of a Speaker may have an enormous deal to do with the protection of minorities; and it is also perfectly possible that one Order may prefer one person as Speaker, and the other Order may prefer another. As far as I can make out this would be the result. The popular Order, and not the property Order, would carry their Speaker. The property Order would veto the election; and the election of a Speaker would be suspended for three or five years. I test it on another point of view deeply interesting to the Members of the Irish Party. I test it on the point of Procedure and the Rules of Debate. It is quite possible that a certain portion of the Irish Parliament in the second Order might prefer certain Procedure and Rules of Debate—they might prefer the closure of debate. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the other Order, the first Order, might object to their ideas of Procedure. Again the veto comes in, and the Procedure Regulations and the Rules of Debate are suspended for three or five years. I test it by one more point. I take the question of the Budget. I could imagine the hon. Member for the City of Cork, as Irish Minister, placing before an Irish Parliament the financial arrangements for 1887; I can, without any great stretch of imagination, suppose that those arrangements may not possibly be altogether suited to the Order specially represented by property. That Order demands separate voting, vetoes the Budget for three or five years, and thus the financial arrangements are suspended. It is quite possible that when we have the Bill in print these strictures may not be applicable. It is also possible—and the difficulty of deciding this is very great—that it is intended by the scheme that a Dissolution should, as it were, kill a veto. Whether this is so or not I do not know. I would point out that if it does, the protection of the minority is of the most worthless description; and, more than that, if a Dissolution can kill a veto, the action of the two Orders as regards each other, and as regards the Irish Government, may be so extraordinary as to compel that Government to revert to the sense of the Irish people once or twice a-month. If this is right, it is quite clear that this is a most ludicrous proposal; and it is rather extraordinary that it should appear, up to now, to be a quite fair and natural proposal to the Irish Members. I come to another point, which I think is of the utmost importance. The Prime Minister took great credit to himself for maintaining what he called the fiscal unity of the United Kingdom. How has that been effected? It has been effected by retaining the power of voting the Customs and Excise in the hands of the British Government and the British Parliament; but this is to be done by the violation of the most ancient British right—that taxation and representation should go together. Well, what has been the reason for that change? The Prime Minister told us that it was because he was so extremely anxious to maintain the fiscal unity of the United Kingdom. It may be so. I had an idea that there were other Members here of the Government who were more alive than the First Lord of the Treasury to electioneering considerations, who thought it would be most imprudent if the Customs and Excise were given over to the Irish Parliament; because the proposal of duties being placed on English manufactures and English goods by the Irish Parliament might be extremely unfavourably received by the English constituencies. However that may be I do not know; but the arrangement that was made will be seen by the House to bear the marks of the utmost possible haste, precipitation, and thoughtlessness. We know that on the 13th of March it was proposed by the Government to give the Customs and Excise to the Irish Parliament. [Mr. GLADSTONE dissented.] The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head. Of course, I am going entirely by the statement which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) made on Friday night. But I do not press the point at all. No doubt, it is a matter which must have received a good deal of attention, and may have undergone several modifications; but observe the nature of the arrangement, and let me point out to the House the price which is paid for this arrangement—first by the Irish people, and then by the English people. Sir, the arrangement appears to be this—that, if it is agreed to, the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Party, acting on behalf of Ireland, and representing Ireland, sell to the British Government and the British Parliament, for £1,400,000 a-year, the inalienable right of a free people, that representation and taxation should go together. The hon. Member for the City of Cork stated, in interruption of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, that he considered the £1,400,000 a-year a valuable *quid pro quo*, and, therefore, he was not disposed to press the claim for the Irish Government. But the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his Party, as I think I can show, do more than that. They also sell for £1,400,000 a-year the power of the purse in the Irish Parliament, not as regards the English Government, but as regards the Irish Government. The arrangement is this. There are Customs and Excise in Ireland collected to the amount, at present, of £6,100,000 a-year, and out of that sum £3,500,000 will be taken for the obligations to the Imperial Exchequer, leaving a balance of over £2,500,000 which is to be paid over by the Imperial officials into the Irish Treasury, absolutely beyond the control of the Irish Parliament, not voted by the Irish Parliament, and, for all I know, not controlled even indirectly by the Irish Parliament, but as absolutely in the power of the Irish Government. In addition to that, there will be also in the hands of the Irish Government a Non-Tax Revenue amounting to just a little over £1,000,000 a-year. Therefore, I make out that, in the present arrangement, the Irish Government will have in their hands, practically independent of the Irish Parliament, something a little over £3,000,000 a-year, and in good years considerably over. Now, is not that an extraordinary Constitution to propose? The cost of civil government in Ireland is estimated by the Prime Minister at £2,500,000; therefore, positively, it comes to this, if this arrangement is carried out—that the Irish Government will have at their undisputed control more than enough money to carry on the government of Ireland without the aid of the Parliament at all; and it would be perfectly open to the Irish Government to dismiss the Parliament, and never summon it to Dublin any more. Well, Sir, I shall be glad to know what is the view the Radical and Irish Members take of the proposal that the Customs and the Excise in this country should be voted for a period of years, and should be handed over absolutely to the control of the Treasury? That, literally—if hon. Members will examine the scheme—is put before the House by the Prime Minister, and that is what absolutely arises from it. [Mr. GLADSTONE dissented.] Of course, Sir, the Prime Minister will be able to show whether I am right or wrong; but I do not see any object in his continual negations, unless supported by demonstration. I would also point out to the hon. Member for the City of Cork that the £1,400,000 a-year which he proposes to obtain as the price for a very considerable sacrifice on his part is of an extremely illusory and precarious character. In the first place—and I make the remark without intending the smallest disrespect—the amount rests absolutely on the statement of the Prime Minister. I understood from him that the amount was very difficult to prove by figures and Returns; but, nevertheless, it was certain that that was the amount which would be to the credit of the Irish Government. We all recognize what a master of figures and of finance the Prime Minister is. During his long and illustrious career, year after year the House of Commons has been dazzled by the manner in which he manipulates figures; and certainly, for my own part, as being only a common-place and ordinary human being, I should, if I were making a bargain for the country, like to examine with a little more care the manner in which this £1,400,000 a-year is arrived at. But that, however, is not my duty. I have to point out that the £1,400,000 a-year is of a very precarious character, even if it is the exact amount. It may be largely affected by the importation to England of spirits in bond. It may be largely affected by the diminution in the Excise receipts—a diminution which the Chancellor of the Exchequer will say is going on very rapidly at the present moment. It would also be largely affected by temperance legislation, not necessarily in Ireland, but in England and Scotland. That is the price which the Irish pay for this arrangement, under which fiscal unity is maintained; but what is the price which the English people pay for this arrangement? I think it will be found that the price which the English people pay is far heavier. The effect of this arrangement, so far as I can make out, will be—if it is carried into effect—that the Customs and Excise duties of the whole of Great Britain will be stereotyped. [" No, no! "] Somebody said "No!" Of course, it is quite possible that I am wrong; may I put my argument before the House? It appears to me that the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in England will certainly be very much cramped, if not altogether tied, because what arises from this bargain is that the Customs and Excise are to remain in the hands of the Imperial Parliament, and that Ireland is to pay so much a-year to England and no more. This arises; and I do not see how the Chancellor of the Exchequer in England can ever lower the Customs and Excise duties, because if he lowers the Customs and Excise duties he depletes and diminishes the resources out of which Ireland has got to pay her way and to pay her tribute to England, and he takes that course without the Irish being represented in Parliament. But, further, I do not see how the Chancellor of the Exchequer can raise the Customs and the Excise duties, because if he does so, he forces on the Irish a taxation which they do not want and a surplus revenue which possibly they will not require. Now, Sir, I may be told—"Oh, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in that case, will enter into negotiations with the Irish Government and the Irish Parliament, and he will come to an agreement with them." But what does that really come to, if that is so? It comes to this—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Imperial Parliament at Westminster, wishing to deal with revenue amounting to literally one-half of the whole of our resources, cannot deal with the revenue with any freedom, or indeed with freedom at all, unless he goes to Dublin and sues for permission from the Irish Government and the Irish Parliament. I want to know, in that case, what becomes of the supremacy of the British Parliament? I will only take one case—a case of urgency—which may happen at any time; it happened last year, when the First Lord of the Treasury came down to the House and asked suddenly for £11,000,000 of money. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot carry on rapid negotiations with the Parliament of Ireland as to raising the Customs and Excise, this House may vote the £11,000,000; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not be able to raise the necessary funds. Of course, that is a point on which, no doubt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will enlighten the House. He, no doubt, has studied these matters from a financial point of view; and I feel certain that he is far too jealous a guardian of English finances not to be able to enter into some kind of explanation of this arrangement. Well, Sir, that appears to me to be the price which the English people will have to pay for the maintenance of this fiscal unity, to say nothing, this House must bear in mind, of at least £1,500,000 in hard cash of annual extra taxation which will devolve on the British taxpayer if the Bill passes into law. That is the only remark which I shall make with regard to two of the safeguards proposed by the Prime Minister. It will be possible for anyone with the smallest ingenuity to go on for a long time pointing out all the inconveniencies, all the difficulties, all the absurdities which must apparently inevitably arise from the arrangement proposed—an arrangement which I feel perfectly convinced introduces the greatest maximum of friction and irritation between the two countries, and the smallest conceivable minimum of harmony and co-operation. Well, Sir, I leave over the details of the measure, and I come to the great principle of the Bill. Sir, what is the principle of this Bill? I hold, with a good deal of confidence, that the principle of the Bill is Repeal. The Prime Minister, on Thursday afternoon, stated that it was not the intention of the Government, nor the desire of the Government, nor the act of the Government, to repeal the Act of Union. He said that he only meant to modify it in certain particulars. If it had not been the Prime Minister who made that statement, if it had been any ordinary person, I could hardly have prevented myself from interrupting to ask whether he had read the Act of Union. It is possible that many hon. Members have not been able to refer to the text of the Act of Union; anyhow, as the Act of Union is called in question, the House will allow me to direct its attention to one or two of its principal Articles. The first Article of the Act of Union is—

> "That it be the first Article of the Union of the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall, upon the 1st day of January, which the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, that shall be in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and one, and for ever after, be united into one Kingdom by the name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

Well, Sir, but what does that expression mean? What did the great framers of that Act mean? After all, nobody would say that men like Mr. Pitt and his Colleagues were idiots or fools, and did not know what they were about when they drew up that Act. What do you suppose they meant by the unity of the United Kingdom? Had it no practical effect, or was it to be a unity of the United Kingdom for all those practical purposes for which England and Ireland entered into it? How will you maintain the unity of the United Kingdom now if you pass this Bill into law? In a most singular and curious way. You will maintain it by excluding summarily one portion—a portion which, under certain circumstances, might be very happy and prosperous, a portion inhabited by 5,000,000 of people—from any share and any voice, and for all time, in the discussion of any foreign, any Colonial, any commercial, and any Imperial affairs. And then I am told that the unity of the United Kingdom is maintained, and that the Act of Union is not repealed! But I go on to the next Article, the second, which provides for the Succession to the Crown; and I would only point out on that point that if, in the course of time, the House of Commons should be called on to face a great crisis as regards the Succession to the Crown, as it had to do in the beginning of the 18th century, Ireland will, under this Bill, have no voice in that important matter. The Imperial Parliament can impose—if such a crisis were to arise—any Monarch upon Ireland which it chooses, and Ireland has nothing to say to it; and yet I am told that the unity of the United Kingdom is maintained! I go now to the most important Article of the Act of Union, which provides—I do not know if I have the exact words. [The ATTORNEY GENERAL here handed the noble Lord the Statute Book across the Table.] I thank the hon. and learned Gentleman. The third Article is as follows—it is very short, and it is the main Article of the Act—

> "That it be third Article of Union that the said United Kingdom be represented in one and the same Parliament, to be stiled the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

It is provided by the Act of Union that Ireland is to be represented in the same Parliament as the people of England and Scotland; and it is provided by this Bill that the Irish Members, for all purposes whatever and for all time, shall never be represented at Westminster again. And yet I am told by the Prime Minister, and we are all told, that this is not Repeal. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman, no doubt, by what the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) so properly called his colossal intellect and great genius, is able, and has often shown the House that he is able, to place the most extraordinary meaning and construction upon words and sentences. We have been told by him of the distinction between a war and military operations. We have been told of many other singular distinctions; but I confidently ask the House whether they ever heard of such an extraordinary distinction as that by which he argued that this measure is not a repeal of the Union? The Prime Minister also declared in his speech that the supremacy of Parliament would not be impaired in the slightest degree. These were his words. But I do not understand what is really meant by "Parliament" in this case. Does he mean the Parliament that remains at Westminster?—because after this Bill comes into operation the Parliament that remains at Westminster, and which will be for all intents and purposes the Imperial Parliament, can no longer make any laws for Ireland, except on certain limited and specified points. It cannot, with these exceptions, make a single law; it cannot repeal a single law for Ireland. I shall state it in this way. Suppose that the Irish Government and the Irish Parliament encounter some little difficulty—which may possibly be the case—in asserting their authority or in maintaining their authority in certain parts of Ireland; suppose that the Government of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) is compelled by this difficulty to bring in and pass some measure for the disarmament of Ulster, or for the abolition of trial by jury in Ulster, or for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus in that part of the country? The Imperial Parliament cannot say one word. Even the Prerogatives of the Crown, of assent or veto, may be delegated to the Viceroy, and the Imperial Parliament will have no official knowledge of that strange and alarming state of things. Not a word can the Imperial Parliament say; and the grand result of all that will undoubtedly turn out to be that the protection of the lives, the liberties, and the property of every man, woman, and child in Ireland passes absolutely and for ever from the jurisdiction of the Imperial Parliament in England. And yet, Sir, in the face of that, I am told, and the House of Commons is told, and we are expected to believe, with the unreasoning and blind credulity of an African negro, who may possibly think he is almost listening to the voice of Divine infallibility—we are positively expected to believe and to receive without question the statement in the face of that illustration, that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament is not impaired in the smallest degree! There is another aspect, looking at the scheme as a whole, in which it is most illogical, strangely illogical. You find, if you look at the scheme carefully, an enormous amount of giving with one hand and taking away with the other. You find the most curious manifestation of exuberant confidence, combined simultaneously with the most curious manifestation of the most profound distrust. We trust Ireland, and yet the Government tells us that Ireland is so irritated, so estranged, so hostile to this country, that the very fact of that hostility forces us to give her this new Irish Government with an independent Parliament. Could there be a more enormous exhibition of confidence when Ireland is in such a frame of mind; and ought not that perfect confidence to carry with it logically almost everything else that can be conceived? But what do we find? It really appears to me, if I may say it without rousing the impatience of hon. Members below the Gangway, that if I were an Irishman, and looking at the scheme from a patriotic point of view, as they do, I could not help feeling that the honour and dignity of my country, which had asserted its right and won its claim to have an independent Parliament, was deeply wounded and affronted by the fact that this independent Parliament, under this Magna Charta of my country's liberties, was not to be trusted to deal with any matter arising out of six specified and most important points. In the first place, the Irish Parliament is not to be trusted to deal at all possibly, or at any rate only to a very limited extent, with any of the rights of the existing owners of land. In the second place, the Irish Parliament is not to be trusted to deal with or to care for the protection of the persons or the rights of the existing Judges. The Judicial Bench in Ireland, although some of its members have got into what the Prime Minister described as uneasy relations with what would be the predominant party, has, it will be admitted, long been remarkable for its great learning and its signal incorruptibility. And although that is their position, and although they ought by these means to have gained the confidence and affection of the Irish people, the existing Judges cannot be trusted to the care of the Irish Parliament. But a most curious detail arises in reference to the Irish Judges, to which I would draw attention for a moment. Take the case of the Judges of the Exchequer. They are not to be trusted, either at present or in future, to the proposed Irish Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman said he must make an exception in regard to the Judges of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland. And why? On account, said the right hon. Gentleman, of the enormous financial relations we think it necessary to keep a certain amount of hold on the Court of Exchequer, or, at least, upon two of its members. As a matter of fact, that is a curious expression to use, because there is no Court of Exchequer in Ireland. It was abolished in 1877. There is a Division of the Supreme Court, which, I believe, is called the Exchequer Division. This does not exactly mean the same thing as a Court of Exchequer. But Her Majesty's Government reserve the right to appoint the two Judges of the Exchequer Division. Mark the absurdity and inutility of this check, and the very gratuitous affront that it seems to put upon the Irish people. The Collector of Revenue, an Imperial official, obtains a decree in the Court of Exchequer in which the Government say they are to appoint two Judges. Who can execute that decree? The only persons who can execute that decree are the Civil officers who are under the control of the Civil Irish Government; and if the Civil officers should not be allowed by the Irish Government to execute the decree, the check upon the Court of Exchequer obtained by the Government is absolutely worthless. Another very singular point is that the Exchequer Division can make no order, even in Revenue matters, which is not subject to appeal in the Irish Court of Appeal. But the Irish Court of Appeal will be composed of Irish Judges appointed by the Irish Government. So where is the value of the check which, on account of these enormous financial relations, you think it so necessary to retain? Is it not an extraordinary thing that Her Majesty's Government are willing to trust the Irish Judges appointed by the Irish Government with the lives, with the liberties, and with the property of every man, woman, and child in Ireland; but Her Majesty's Government would not trust Irish Judges with one single penny of the British Revenue? Well, there is another point on which the Irish Parliament cannot be trusted. They cannot be trusted to deal with the existing Civil Service. In the proposal of the Prime Minister every member of the Civil Service in Ireland, after the Irish Government and the Irish Parliament have been constituted, may immediately claim his discharge upon certain terms, putting at once an enormous outlay on the Irish Estimates for what may be called the Non-Effective Service. Moreover, the Irish Parliament will have nothing to do with the police, with the military, or the Militia, nor with any service whatever arising out of the question of defence. I should have thought that one of the most inalienable rights of the Irish people was the right to provide for their own self-defence; but everything relating to the defence of Ireland is withdrawn from the cognizance of the Irish Parliament. Now comes the most important matter. The Irish Parliament is not to be trusted to deal with any of the laws relating to trade and navigation. That betrays, on the part of the Government, most extraordinary ignorance apparently. I should withdraw that word seeing the great historian opposite me; it would seem to betray ignorance, if it were not for the Chief Secretary, of Irish history. For what was the unfailing cause of every single dispute which arose during the period, 500 years ago, between the Irish Parliament and the British Parliament, except this cause, and this cause only—the right claimed by the English Parliament to legislate on matters affecting trade and navigation in Ireland? It was the subject of this exclusive right claimed by the English Parliament that led to the movement of 1781; and it was the concession of that which procured the independence of the Grattan Parliament in 1782. And yet, with all that historical knowledge, no doubt most ably placed before them, the Government deliberately refuse to trust the Irish Parliament with the control of any single matter relating to trade and navigation. What is to be the effect of this? Is not the principal export from Ireland to England cattle, sheep, and pigs? Well, imagine now this. Information might be given to the Government that there was pleuro-pneumonia or foot-and-mouth disease in Ireland. The British Government, under the existing laws, could instantly prohibit the exportation of any cattle from Ireland into England, and for any length of time, bringing by that act immediate ruin to an enormous number of Irish farmers, and not one single Irish Member could in any way whatever raise his voice against that act, or correct the Government, or give the Government better information. The 103 Irish Members who might have protected Irish farmers from ruin are gone from this House; the total export of cattle might be prohibited by the arbitrary act of the British Government; and yet I am told to believe that the unity of the United Kingdom still remains for all practical purposes unimpaired. I now come to the last point, relating to the Irish Parliament—I mean the question of Ulster. Some people call it Loyal Ulster; some call it Protestant Ulster; but all will call it prosperous and wealthy Ulster. [" No! "] I do not think I will be contradicted if, looking at it from the point of view of Revenue resources alone, I were to call Ulster the heart of Ireland. [" No! "] Hon. Members below the Gangway jeer at that; but I wish to know whether, in their opinion, the Irish Government would be able to carry on, to pay their way, if Ulster were withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Irish Parliament? Call it what you like, Ulster is one of the most historical Provinces of Ireland; but the Government have not yet decided whether Ulster can be trusted to the Irish Parliament or not. In the words of the Prime Minister, it is left for "careful, unprejudiced, future consideration"—in other words, it is left by the Government to the scramble of Committee. Is not that one of the most convincing proofs that could possibly be brought forward that this Government, having pondered over this matter for weeks, having had every kind of information at their disposal, from the highest authorities on history and law, are unable to come to any decision as to the fate of Ulster—is not that an irrefutable proof of the most hopelessly insoluble character of this problem of Home Rule? So much with regard to the general aspect of this scheme. Finally, I ask the House to consider how it is proposed, and in what manner it comes before us. The Prime Minister said on Thursday that it would be necessary to base these proposals for large and extensive changes on the most broad and solid grounds. In that we all agree; but what were the grounds which were put forward by the Prime Minister as broad and solid? If we judge them solely upon the wealth of eloquence, exposition, and illustration with which they were presented, then I admit they have claim to great breadth and solidity; but if we strip them of their rhetorical ornamentations, and analyze them as they stand by themselves, then I think the House will be surprised to find how incredibly slender they are on which to base so vast, so organic a change. The right hon. Gentleman put forward four grounds in support of his proposal. The first was the non-renewal of the Crimes Act by the late Government. That particularly recommends itself to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I know. [The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt): Yes.] Heaven forbid that I should weary the House by re-opening that endless controversy. I will content myself with one remark on this question. The former Government of the present Prime Minister, in 1882, passed a Crimes Act which they deliberately so framed that it was to expire in three years, and the late Government allowed it to expire. The Government of the Earl of Beaconsfield, in 1875, passed a Peace Preservation Act which they deliberately framed so as to expire after five years; and the late Government of the present First Lord of the Treasury allowed that Act to expire, although crime, curiously enough, was on the increase. But the First Lord of the Treasury says that our act, in allowing the Act to expire, was an act of immeasurable historical significance. Why? Why was the act, which took place in June last, one of that character, and the act of the First Lord of the Treasury's Government in 1880 one of no historical significance? And if the act of the Government of the right hon. Gentleman in 1880 had no historical significance, how can he prove that the act of the late Government in June last had so enormous a historical significance that positively on that ground you must base the Repeal of the Union? The second ground which the Prime Minister took is, undoubtedly, much stronger. It was the presence of 86 Members in this House belonging to the Irish National Party; and that is a matter which would lead even the most unreflective mind to profound reflection. But, in the first place, it does not appear to me absolutely proved, as it were, demonstrated *primâ facie*, why 86 Members should on any single proposition prevail over the voice of 584. In the second place, while I fully admit to any extent within reason the formidable character of that Party, and the power which it can exercise in the Imperial Parliament, I take leave to doubt the permanence of that formidable character. Any study of Irish history will show that no Irish political Party has ever held together for long. [*Ironical cheers and laughter.*] I pray hon. Members not to be disposed to prevent me from placing my arguments before the House, because they are fair, and there are certain things which must be said in the interest of truth and justice. I repeat—and I defy hon. Members below the Gangway to contradict me in debate—that no Irish Party in history ever held together for long. Resistance to any Irish political Party has always strained it, and has ultimately destroyed it. I take the Party of Mr. O'Connell, the Party headed by him in 1835. Nothing could have been more formidable, apparently, than that Party, on account of the balance of strength between Whigs and Tories: yet that Party in time melted away, broke up, and Mr. O'Connell died abroad a stranger, and some people said of a broken heart. Well, if I take a Party which I recollect well, because it made its first appearance when I entered Parliament—the Party of Mr. Butt in 1874. Mr. Butt came back to Parliament at the head of a Party nominally 50 or 60 strong. What became of that Party in this House? The hon. Member for the City of Cork can tell the House, at all events. I had the honour, which I shall always value, of knowing Mr. Butt with some degree of intimacy towards the close of his days, and I saw him not long before he died; and I can say that Mr. Butt, like Mr. O'Connell, died in the deepest distress of mind in regard to the political faith of his Party in this House. Then I will take what I may call the first Party of the hon. Member for the City of Cork—the Party which made its appearance in 1880. Before Parliament met that year that Party came together; they met and elected the hon. Member for the City of Cork as their Leader, and they came to this House. [Mr. PARNELL: After Mr. Butt's death.] I am aware of that; and they came back to this Parliament apparently united, as far as English opinion could judge, and numbering some 60 votes. But the Parliament had not been six months in Session before that Party was sharply divided—and sharply divided it remained during the whole of the last Parliament. Well, now, we have to examine the second Party which has been formed by the hon. Member for the City of Cork. It is certainly in appearance a most formidable and numerous Party; but it seems to me that the hon. Member is himself aware of the great danger of disunion, which has been the historical accompaniment of every Irish political Party, because he has taken a step hitherto absolutely unknown to the Parliamentary life of the United Kingdom. Every Member of that Party has signed a most solemn and binding pledge that he will vote in a particular manner. ["No!"] Hon. Members will have an opportunity of answering me if I am wrong; but, speaking from the knowledge which I possess, I affirm that a pledge never given before has been given by every Irish Member; and the fact that such a pledge has been exacted makes it impossible to suppose that the Party of the hon. Member for the City of Cork is free from the hereditary tendency to disunion. Well, that Party has not yet been tried. It has only just, I may say, been born; and I cannot admit—and the House, I think, will not admit—that the mere appearance of this Party in this Parliament is sufficient, before they have even formulated any clear demands, to cause the fabric of that Union which was constructed by Mr. Pitt, and which has been maintained without hesitation or alteration by every succeeding Minister down to the present day, to fall to pieces, as the walls of Jericho fell before the migrating masses of Israel. The third ground upon which the Prime Minister based his proposal was undoubtedly a most original ground. He based his third argument for Repeal upon the existence of St. George's Channel. I recollect quite well the Prime Minister visiting Ireland. I had the extreme honour at that time—which I shall not forget—of being presented to the right hon. Gentleman. I remember that the weather was most boisterous and tempestuous, and the right hon. Gentleman had most excellent reasons for conceiving an undying animosity against St. George's Channel, and for making it, as it were, the scapegoat of his future Irish policy. As to the argument of the Channel, I have to say this. You have had in this House important and long debates on the principles of the Union. Every argument for and against has been applied with every amount of ingenuity which can be imagined; but this is the very first time in the history of these debates that the argument of geography has been summoned to the aid of Repeal. And the Prime Minister, with a daring which nobody but he could employ, has taxed the argument of geography, that tremendous weapon of defence which has always been on the side of the Union, and has used it as an instrument in favour of Repeal. If the House will recollect for a moment the extraordinary difficulties which attended the transit between Ireland and Britain and between Dublin and London in the year 1800—will remember that it sometimes took a man six weeks to go from London to Dublin, and will call to mind the ease and rapidity and regularity of the transit now, they will not be inclined to admit that the argument which was good enough for the construction of the Union in 1800 has been in any way lessened or weakened by the invention of steam, railways, and telegraphs. The fourth ground which the Prime Minister took up was the most daring of all, and, if true, it was undoubtedly the most melancholy. The Prime Minister said we cannot govern Ireland any longer, because our law is discredited in Ireland. And why is our law discredited? Because, he says, our law comes to the Irish people with a foreign aspect and in a foreign garb. Of course, it is sad to hear the First Minister of the Crown proclaim to the Parliament of the United Kingdom that the Irish are aliens to the English and Scotch, and the English and Scotch are aliens to the Irish. The First Lord of the Treasury had just been five years in Parliament when Lord Lyndhurst, in the House of Lords, denounced the Irish as being aliens in race and religion. [Mr. GLADSTONE: And in language.] Aliens in race, religion, and language. Mr. Sheil, in this House, pointed to Lord Lyndhurst, who was at that time sitting under the Gallery, and created a most extraordinary scene, speaking on behalf of the whole Irish nation, and making what was undoubtedly the most brilliant oration that he ever delivered, by repudiating with the utmost vigour the construction which was then put upon Lord Lyndhurst's words, and which I can now legitimately draw from the arguments of the Prime Minister. But is it not still more sad and melancholy when the First Minister of the Crown, who makes this despairing confession, is one who for the last 25 years of his life has striven to the best of his light and ability to remove all traces of alienation which have existed between the English and the Irish? Is not this the most complete confession of utter and hopeless failure—failure of efforts which may be called, without exaggeration, the efforts of a lifetime? If the confession were limited merely to a confession it would be sad enough. But when the confession is accompanied by a new policy and a new proposal, it is a confession of a nature which should cause the House of Commons to pause. The Prime Minister seemed to me, when he made that confession, to forget for the moment what a fatal confession it was to his own proposal. In what aspect and in what garb will this Magna Charta go to Ireland? Surely, it will have the same aspect and same garb which the Prime Minister ascribes to the measures for Catholic Emancipation, Municipal Reform, Parliamentary Reform, the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and for the alteration of the Land Laws, all of which laws, the Prime Minister tells us, are discredited in Ireland. [Mr. GLADSTONE dissented.] Those laws went to the Irish people quite as much as any other laws with a foreign aspect and in a foreign garb; and, assuming that this Bill was passed into law, we must remember that the good relations between England and Ireland, according to the policy of the Prime Minister, will depend upon the faithful observance by the Irish of the conditions of this contract. But according to the Prime Minister, after an experience of 50 years, Magna Charta is likely to be repudiated and discredited because it goes to them with a foreign aspect and in a foreign garb. Well, Sir, those are the four main grounds, as it appears to me, on which the Prime Minister produced his proposals; and, of course, the House of Commons will judge whether those grounds are sufficiently broad and solid. The Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant supplied another ground on Friday night for the introduction of these proposals. I do not wish to say anything that might be considered in the least degree disrespectful, or bitter, or personal with reference to the Chief Secretary, because I recognize that, excluding the Prime Minister, he is among the chief Members of the Government, perhaps, the only one who can base upon his public performances a claim to sincerity in connection with this question. The Chief Secretary, in his speech on Friday night, did not condescend to enter into any explanation—although, Heaven knows, explanation has been much asked for, and is sorely wanted. The right hon. Gentleman treated the question with the vaguest generalities. I would ask him whether he has ever, in his literary researches, met the description applied by Mr. Grattan to the speech of Lord Clare? The following are Mr. Grattan's words:—

> "Great generosity of assertion, great thrift of argument, a turn to be offensive without the power to be severe—fury in the temper and famine in the phrase."

I do not know whether the Chief Secretary recollects that description; but I do not think for a moment of applying it to his speech. The only precise statement to which the right hon. Gentleman committed himself about the future of Ireland, in answer to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), was that Messrs. Sheridan, Egan, and Patrick Ford would not, according to his profound belief, find places in the new Irish Parliament. He found fault with the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Trevelyan) for bringing what he termed a tremendous indictment against the Irish constituencies, and argued that the only logical conclusion, if the views of that right hon. Gentleman were accepted, would be to govern Ireland as a Crown Colony. Well, I shall wait with the utmost curiosity to see whether any Member from Ireland, belonging to the Nationalist Party, confirms the belief of the Chief Secretary in that particular, more especially as I notice that the Irish National League in America, of which Sheridan, Egan, and Patrick Ford are, I believe, conspicuous members — [*Cries of* "No!" *from the Irish Members.*]

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Ford is not a member of the National League.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Well, Sheridan and Egan are.

MR. DILLON: They are none of them members.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: All I know is that a telegram reached this country quite recently in which occurred the words—"The Irish National League and the friends of President Sheridan"—[*Cries of* "No!"]

MR. DILLON: The friends of President Sullivan, not Sheridan. Mr. Sullivan is a native-born American.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I, of course, shall not urge any argument I was about to found upon that; but I shall be curious to know whether the Irish Party will confirm the statement of the Chief Secretary, because undoubtedly it is an important matter. The right hon. Gentleman did give us one really good ground, in his opinion, for passing this measure, in addition to the grounds expressed by the Prime Minister. He said—"If you reject this Bill and turn us out of Office, you will be doing that which the desperadoes whom you allude to and whom you fear would most desire." He intimated that the consequences would be a "No Rent" Manifesto, dynamite explosions, a great outbreak of crime and outrage, and possibly civil war. He went further than that, and stated that the Land League might have to be suppressed, and that if we suppressed the Land League we should have to lock up priests and Bishops, thereby, apparently, connecting, so far as I can judge, the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Ireland with associations which might have been summarily suppressed on account of its connection with crime and outrage.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I did not say that.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I only judged the speech as I heard it, and I am certain that many hon. Members had the same impression.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I am sorry to interrupt the noble Lord. I was criticizing the policy of the noble Lord himself. The noble Lord and his Friends proposed to suppress the League, and I was pointing out the attendant consequences which must go with the suppression of the League.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: The Chief Secretary will not, I think, contradict me in this—that he said no less than twice that if we rejected this Bill and turned out the Government, we must be prepared for the most awful consequences in crime and outrage. All I am going to say on that point is, that that is a tremendous intimation made by a Minister of the Crown responsible for the government of Ireland. The very fact of such an intimation being made might be held by ill-disposed persons to justify the fulfilment of the prophecy. Not only might it be so held by ill-disposed persons; but it might, to some extent, lead the House to the conclusion that what the Prime Minister called the motor muscle of the policy now before the House is fear of these things, and that the Magna Charta, which is to have such beneficent effects in the future of Ireland—this Magna Charta in the disguise of an act of grace—is, in reality, an act of terror. That is a tremendous intimation which the Chief Secretary gave us. It greatly impressed both sides of the House; but he seemed inclined in that speech to accuse me of contingent sedition. [MR. JOHN MORLEY: Hear, hear!] I only expressed my belief in Belfast that, under certain circumstances, civil war would break out in Ireland; and the Chief Secretary expressed his belief that, under certain circumstances, crime, outrage, assassination, and dynamite would ensue. He accuses me of contingent sedition. Might I not, without any great stretch of ingenuity, retort that accusation upon him? But this prophecy of the right hon. Gentleman, having been made to the House of Commons, and having been made a ground for passing this Bill, just let me for a moment deal with it. Let us see if these dangers are so very alarming that they ought in any way, or for one moment, to influence our actions. Are these new dangers? Has the House of Commons had no experience of them? Have we never known of the "No Rent" Manifesto? Why, the First Lord of the Treasury himself had to encounter a "No Rent" Manifesto in 1881; and the statesman, whose body, on Friday last, passed through Westminster Abbey on the way to its grave in the north, encountered, and encountered successfully, a "No Rent" Manifesto. Well, Sir, let us next deal with the dynamite explosions. Have we had no experience of the dynamite explosions? I see, sitting opposite me, the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), who can tell the House that, with regard to dynamite explosions, we certainly were most providentially and most miraculously preserved from an awful disaster. But the dynamiters—the people who were inculpated in these atrocities—are now undergoing what has been called a living death. Well, Sir, an outburst of crime and outrage—has the House had no experience of that? I always understood that it was one of the great glories of the Government of Earl Spencer that he rapidly, successfully, and summarily put down a great outburst of crime and outrage in Ireland. Then, Sir, as to assassination. I cannot forget that assassination in 1882 cost Ireland the life of one of her most faithful sons, and the House of Commons the life of one of its most valuable and respected Members. But, Sir, the House of Commons ought not to be influenced, with regard to its future policy, by any such argument as that to which I have referred. Assassination is one of the rarest incidents of modern political life. It used to be a common method of political warfare; but the growth and progress of civilization has demonstrated its utter folly and inutility. A man in public life ought not to be deterred by the knowledge that by some mischance, on some day or other, he might be the mark of a lunatic or criminal, any more than anybody contemplating a railway journey would be deterred by the fear of an accident. Therefore, of all the grounds of policy put forward in support of this Bill, the ground advanced by the Chief Secretary I consider to be the weakest of all. There is only one ground for this policy which has any claim to breadth and solidity; and that is the ground which may be made up from the fact that this measure has been produced by the Government of the Queen, and produced by the Government of which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian is the head. That is a ground the breadth and solidity of which I am not prepared to recognize; but I do recognize the enormous advantage which is to be given to the National Party. I consider it to have been my good fortune to have heard and to have read many speeches and many orations of the Prime Minister with regard to Ireland. Many of his most confident predictions, vaticinations, and declarations are fresh in my mind. I have been more than once under what may be called the wand of the magician; and I know of no experience to which I can compare it, except, perhaps, the taking of morphia. The sensations, while the operation is going on, are transcendent; but the recovery is bitter beyond all experience. Well, Sir, bringing the light of my experience of these declarations and vaticinations to bear on this policy, I challenge any one of the most devoted admirers, or of the most ardent supporters, of the Prime Minister to point out one single prediction with regard to Ireland which has been verified, or one single declaration which has been maintained. But if the light of experience is not bright enough for us; if our blindness requires that the absolute darkness of the future should be illuminated by some friendly flash of light, I find the warning beacon in the speech of the Chief Secretary on Friday night. In alluding to the reminiscence called up by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), in regard to an expression of opinion by the Prime Minister at Newcastle many years ago, that Jefferson Davis had made a nation—the Chief Secretary admitted the error, but chided the cruelty of the recollection; and he declared that, in his opinion, speaking as an historian, history would deal leniently with the error of the Prime Minister; because, when the history of the century came to be written, it would show that in Italy, in Bulgaria, and also in Ireland, the Prime Minister had made a nation. That is exactly the position which the opponents of this Bill take up. We believe that, if this measure passes into law, when the history of this century comes to be written—and it may not be many years hence, some of us, even, may live to read it—the result of this Act will be decided to be that, as is the position of Italy towards Austria, having been freed from the yoke of Austria—as is the position of Bulgaria towards Turkey, having been freed from the yoke of the Sultan, so is the position of Ireland towards Great Britain, having been freed from the supremacy of Parliament and the Sovereignty of the Queen. I thank the House for having listened to me so long, and with so much patience. I deeply regret that it has not been deemed to be consistent with the customs and courtesies of the House of Commons to take a division on the Motion to introduce this Bill. I should have liked myself to record my vote against it, because I believe it entails a policy which the House of Commons ought not to entertain. But the day of division will, after all, speedily arrive; and on that day hon. Members will have in their hands more directly and more closely than ever they have had before, or will ever have again, the fortunes and the fate of the British Empire. For my own part, I confidently declare I shall cheerfully raise my voice, and give my vote, against a policy which has, in my opinion, been most unconstitutionally sprung upon an unwary and unwarned House of Commons, and which I myself consider to be a most desperate and fatal policy.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL) (Hackney, S.): I feel that I have especial need to ask, on this occasion, the indulgence of the House, following, as I attempt to do, the noble Lord opposite, who is so distinguished a Member of this House, and whose speeches are always so interesting if they be not always so instructive. The noble Lord began by expressing his resolution to import into the discussion of this question no passion and no prejudice, and he expressed the hope that that policy would be pursued by other hon. Members who might take part in the debate. I shall endeavour, Sir, to act upon the advice of the noble Lord; but, when he was giving that advice, it occurred to me that it was a pity he did not take it into consideration himself at an earlier stage in the discussion of this question; that he did not recollect the advisability and necessity of approaching a question of this gravity and importance without prejudice and without passion, when he made that speech at Paddington, in which he told his constituents that, in considering this question, the only people that could be regarded in Ireland by the English people were the Protestants of Ireland. It was in reference to a question affecting a country, the vast majority of whose inhabitants are Catholics, that the noble Lord raised the "No Popery" cry. That is the noble Lord's freedom from prejudice! Then, having gone to Belfast, the noble Lord delivered himself of a speech which involved what my right hon. Friend (Mr. John Morley) called "contingent sedition." That speech was understood by those to whom it was addressed, and was intended by the noble Lord to be so understood, to mean that if Parliament should give effect to the scheme of self-government for Ireland, he and thousands of persons would be found to show reasons for resisting it.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: With regard to the Ulster speech, I have not attempted to enter into any explanation, because a Motion is down on the Paper with regard to it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Well, I will not dwell on that point any longer. The noble Lord gave some criticisms, in detail, of the scheme which it is sought to introduce, and he was pleased to be humorous on what he called its absurd, incongruous, ridiculous provisions. While the noble Lord was critical, he took care to commit himself to no alternative constructive policy. But the noble Lord might have reserved his criticisms of those details until the scheme was before the House. The noble Lord seems to have satisfied himself that, somehow or other, £3,000,000 would get into the hands of the new Irish Government and be under their control, without the intervention of any legislative or other authority. He seems to think that once money gets into the Treasury it can be taken out of it without a Vote of Appropriation! Again, I would say the noble Lord had better wait until he sees how the matter stands in the Bill which is about to be introduced. At the end of the noble Lord's speech the question which occurred to me, and must have occurred to many hon. Members, was this—"What is the alternative policy which the noble Lord and the Party behind him have to suggest?"

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: We told it on the 26th of January.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If ever there was a more ridiculous farce in public life than that declaration of policy I do not know what it was. The Motion, which the late Government were treating as a Motion of Censure, began, I think, on Thursday night, and on the Saturday—["No, no!"] I am speaking of the famous occasion when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Strand Division of Westminster was supposed to have gone to Dublin. I do not know whether he ever reached Dublin; but the information he obtained was supposed to have come by telegraph, and resulted in the famous declaration of policy to which the noble Lord has referred. But, Sir, I will come to the question which the House desires to hear discussed, and that is the essential question involved in this Bill. I desire to say something in justification of the policy of the scheme, because it contains a principle in the development of which I believe I see the prospect of great good to the country of my birth, and of great good to the country of my adoption. It is proposed to alter materially the state of things by which Ireland is ruled by laws made in this Parliament and by an Executive and Administrative system—the creation of those laws—in which the Irish have no effective voice. I am not going to dwell upon ancient history; nothing of the kind. The noble Lord referred to the Act of Union, and it becomes me to consider, for one moment, what was that Act, how was it passed, and, above all, how it has answered the purposes for which it was passed? When the noble Lord and his Friends speak of that Act as a fundamental law, let me remind the House that 17 short years before, in 1783, a law equally fundamental had been passed by the Parliament of England, and received the sanction of both the great Parties in that Parliament. So far as Grattan's Resolution was successful in Ireland it was principally carried into effect by the repeal of Poynings' Act. But in the English Parliament there were two solemn Acts of legislation, giving effect to the declaration of the Irish Parliament. The first was the 22 *Geo.* III., which repealed the Act of George I. by which Ireland was treated as a Dependency of the English Crown. The second was the Act 23 *Geo.* III., c. 28, which recites that, whereas doubts had arisen whether the previous Acts recited were sufficient to secure to the people of Ireland the rights claimed by them to be bound by laws enacted by the Parliament of that Kingdom, with the assent of the King, enacted that the right to be only so bound shall be and is hereby declared to be established and ascertained for ever, and shall at no time hereafter be questioned or questionable. That was an Act of a particularly solemn character, because it was introduced under the Ministry of Lord Shelburne, when Mr. Pitt was Chancellor of the Exchequer; and it was passed by the Coalition Government, of which the Duke of Portland, Lord North, and Mr. Fox were Members. I am not going back to the history of Grattan's Parliament. It was undoubtedly followed by marked progress and prosperity. The prosperity and progress of the country were unquestionable; but I quite admit that that was not all due to the Parliament. Causes outside and in some ways irrespective of Parliament contributed. But the Irish Parliament showed an intelligent appreciation of the use to which legislation should be applied by its efforts to guard personal liberty by the enactment of a Habeas Corpus Act, and by securing the independence of the Judges. It also took a large step in the direction of Catholic Emancipation, and thus vindicated its claim to be called an enlightened Body. The story of the abolition of the Irish Parliament is a shameful story. I do not think that history discloses a story more shameful in its character. It was opposed, as Mr. Lecky has well said, by all the unbribed intellect of Ireland. There is no more interesting and solemn document than the Protest which the Lords in the Irish Parliament presented against the passing of the Act of Union. They protest—

> "Because the argument made use of in favour of the Union—namely, that the sense of the people of Ireland is in its favour, we know to be untrue; but as the Ministers have declared that they would not press the measure against the sense of the people, and as the people have pronounced decidedly and under all difficulties their judgment against it, we have, together with the voice of the country, the authority of the Ministers, to enter our protest against the project of Union, against the yoke which it imposes, the dishonour which it inflicts, the disqualification passed upon the Peerage, the stigma thereby branded on the Realm, the disproportionate principle of expense it introduces, the means employed to effect it, the discontents it has excited and must continue to excite—against all these and the fatal consequences they may produce we have endeavoured to interpose our votes, and failing, we transmit to after-times our names in solemn protest on behalf of the Parliamentary Constitution of this Realm, the liberty which it secured, the trade which it protected, the connection which it preserved, and the Constitution which it supplied and fortified. This we feel ourselves called upon to do in support of our characters, and whatever is left to us worthy to be transmitted to our prosterity."

The Bar of Ireland protested, the Professions protested, aye, and the Orangemen protested. One of the last speeches made in protest against the Act of Union was made by a man whose name is honourably known in Irish history, and honourably borne by my right hon. Friend the senior Member for Dublin University—I mean Mr. Plunket. I believe the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) also had a relative in the Irish Parliament who voted against the Act of Union. I ask the Representatives of these distinguished persons, some of whom are in this House, for the Marquess of Downshire was one of the first to sign the Protest, whether they intend to cast the stigma upon the memory of their fathers that they voted as they did, not upon broad principles of patriotism and devotion to their country, but to keep up and preserve to themselves a narrow class ascendancy? I do not believe that they will do so. What was the reception that the Act of Union had in the English House of Parliament? I desire, in pressing this argument, to show that, in recurring as the Government are doing to the scheme of self-government for Ireland, they are recurring to a Liberal policy that was departed from years ago. In this House in 1800 Mr. Grey, afterwards Lord Grey, author of the Reform Bill of 1832, made a powerful and prophetic speech. He said—

> "What I most heartily wish for is a union between the two countries. By a union, I mean something more than a mere word—a union, not of Parliaments, but of hearts, affections, and interests, a union of vigour, of ardour, of zeal for the general welfare of the British Empire. It is this species of union, and this only, that can tend to increase the real strength of the Empire and to give it security against any danger."

He winds up by saying that if the measure is carried resentment will follow, and the people of the country will wait for an opportunity of recovering their rights, which they will claim were taken from them by force. Afterwards Lord Grey unquestionably declined to be a party to disturbing the Act of Union, and probably at that time rightly so, because he desired that full and fair opportunity should be given to see whether the experiment, after the lapse of years, worked well and answered the purpose for which it was passed. Among others who took this line of policy was an ancestor, I believe, of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington)—Lord George Cavendish; and, greatest of all the men who were the leaders of Liberal opinion and thought in those days, Mr. Fox himself. But, of course, it may be said, and rightly said, that this is ancient history. I agree that that is so, and I also agree that if this Act had answered its purpose, or had half answered its purpose—if it had been found to bring peace to the country, strength to the Empire, and real union among the people, then I say let no man dare to put his hand upon it. But has it? What is the history that has followed it? The Prime Minister the other night referred to a short space of years during which there was an absence of repressive legislation. A little closer examination will show that there practically was no period in which there was not, in some form or other, some kind of repressive legislation. Repressive legislation of the kind I am now speaking of may be said to be comprised under four heads—Martial Law, Peace Preservation Acts, Arms and Insurrection Acts, and Suspension of the Habeas Corpus. With regard to Arms or Insurrection Acts, these were passed or put in force during the following years:—1800-2, 1807-10, 1814, 1818, 1822-4, 1829, 1831, 1843, 1867, 1868, and 1870. The Habeas Corpus was suspended in 1800-2, 1803-6, 1822, 1848-9, 1866, 1867, 1868, and 1869. Martial law was put in force in 1803 and 1805, and Peace Preservation Acts in 1814-23, 1870-6, 1876-80, and 1881-5. There is, therefore, practically no period since the Union that has not been overlapped by one or other of these laws. This presents very serious food for reflection. Testing this Legislative Union by its utility—and I think the noble Lord opposite will admit the test to be a right one—the results certainly cannot be shown to be satisfactory. I see that the noble Lord has applied this test of utility even to the Throne, the Lords and the Commons. In 1884, when he was wooing the electors of Birmingham, he said—

> "We defend the Constitution solely on the ground of its utility to the people. It is on the ground of utility alone that we go forth to meet our foe, and if we fail to make good our ground in utilitarian arguments and for utilitarian ends, then let the present combination of Throne, Lords, and Commons be for ever swept away."

I have fortified myself by the high authority of the noble Lord. Then, I ask, is it the case that the Act of Union has effected the useful purposes for which it was supposed to be devised—is it the case that there is now a real Union? Are not the nations still estranged from one another? Is there a moral power behind the law in Ireland, and have there not been sent from Ireland to beyond the seas, with bitterness in their hearts, great masses of its people? Is it to be said that this is due to the perversity of the Irish character? I will answer in the words of Mr. John Stuart Mill, who treats excuses of that kind as what he calls "the weak excuses of imbecile statesmen." All this is not due to the perversity of the Irish character. If we take the history of the legislative wants of Ireland, the way in which they have been dealt with, and what has taken place in relation to them, I think there is sufficient evidence to show that the United Parliament has failed in its duties, has fallen short of the discharge of its duties towards Ireland, and has failed to appreciate the wants of that country. Catholic Emancipation, one of the things held out by Mr. Pitt as a reason why persons professing that religion should support the Act of Union, was not granted until the country was on the eve of civil war. The Tithes Question was not dealt with until after the murder of the widow M'Cormac. The Church Establishment was not dealt with until 1868, although condemned by every Liberal statesman; and the most important of all, the question of the land, was not dealt with until comparatively recently. As the Prime Minister has pointed out, not to go back further than the years 1843-5, the needs of the Irish people, as regards Irish land legislation and the dual ownership in the land which then existed between the tenants who improved and the landlords who did not help in the improvements, were very great. Some there are in the House who were here at that time. The unsuccessful efforts made, Session after Session, by Mr. Sharman Crawford to get an amended Land Bill passed for the protection of the Ulster farmers will be remembered. Frederick Lucas, Charles Gavan Duffy, and Isaac Butt were men who had worn their hearts out almost in attempts to pass effectual legislation upon this subject. It was not until 1870 that a land measure was passed, which I beg leave to say was a most imperfect Bill, and not until 1881 was anything like a real and thorough measure passed for the protection of the tenants, and that we owe to the energy and determination of the present Prime Minister. But that Bill was marred because, in the framing of it, the Irish Members were not consulted, and it was not brought into that complete harmony with their exact wants and wishes which would have made it complete and in every way satisfactory. I will give one incident as showing the difficulties which public men in Ireland who are interested in public affairs have to overcome. I have mentioned one of these men, Charles Gavan Duffy, who, finally heartbroken almost, went to Victoria, and there, in the free air of a self-governing State, found scope for his labours and his genius. Under the Government of that State Mr. Gavan Duffy rose to the highest position that was open to him; and he, who had been three times prosecuted as a rebel in his own country, comes back from Victoria to this country, to receive dignities and honours at the hands of the Queen. In relation to all the legislation of this Parliament for Ireland there is this to be said—that it has invariably been marked by having been too late. It has further been invariably marked by being not what was asked for by the Irish people, but what the English people, or rather the English Parliament, representing principally English and Scotch opinion, thought the Irish people ought to have asked for. In fact, the history of that legislation has realized in a remarkable degree the celebrated speech of Mr. Fox, which was delivered in 1800 in reference to the Act of Union. Putting the argument in a way in which few men could, he said—

> "The whole scheme (of union) proceeds upon that false and abominable presumption that we we could legislate better for the Irish than they could for themselves—a principle founded on the most arrogant despotism and tyranny. There was not a more clear axiom in the science of politics than that a man was his own natural governor, and that he ought to legislate for himself. No other being could enter into his feelings or have anything common in sympathy with his nature, and therefore the Legislature of a people must flow out of and be identified with the people themselves."

But, Mr. Speaker, there is to be considered something more than a mere question of legislation, or failure in legislation. The effect of law is greatly determined by its administration; and the effect of any system of government is greatly determined by its administrators. In these respects the case of Ireland has indeed been remarkable. In an article in the number of *The Fortnightly Review* for July, 1885, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), after pointing out that the Government of Ireland is most intensely centralized and bureaucratic, and that the whole Government is focussed in the Lord Lieutenant, proceeds thus—

> "If the object of the Government were to paralyze local effort, to annihilate local responsibility, and daily to give emphasis to the fact that the whole country is under the domination of an alien race, no system could be devised more likely to secure its object than that now in force in Ireland. We hold that the continuance of such a system is unjust to Ireland, useless to England, and dangerous to both."

My right hon. Friend ably states the difficulty; but he does not attempt to solve it. Neither in the article quoted, nor in the speech delivered on Friday night, does he attempt to solve the question; but he shows ably and clearly that which hardly needed demonstration—namely, how widely different the case of Ireland is from that of Wales or of Scotland as regards this question, and that the differences are such as to require a wholly different treatment. I would urge upon the House that the only true remedy lies not in mere tinkering with local government, but in giving to Irishmen the right of domestic legislation; and I affirm that, as regards Administrative and Executive authority, the only true and effective control is to be secured by a truly Irish Government responsible to and representing the Irish people. What is the scheme which the Prime Minister on Thursday night unfolded to this House? It is a scheme the essential principle of which is to establish an Irish Legislature, which shall have powers limited by the Bill. It is to deal with all matters affecting Ireland which are not excepted in the Bill. The exceptions the Prime Minister stated the other night. The principal are—Status of the Crown and its Succession; Peace and War, Military and Naval Forces, Treaties; Trade and Navigation; and also Coinage. I contend that these exceptions do maintain the supremacy of the Crown, and of the Imperial Parliament in matters which are Imperial. If it be said that they repeal the Act of Union, let me point out how utter a mistake that is. That the Bill largely modifies the legislative connection as determined by the Act of Union is undoubted; that it repeals the Act of Union I deny. If you are to suppose the Act of Union to be repealed, you must suppose a recurrence to the state of things which existed before the Act of Union. You would have a reconstruction of the Grattan's Parliament—a reconstruction of the House of Lords and of the House of Commons on the lines of Grattan's Parliament. [Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald: No, no!] My right hon. and learned Friend appears to dissent; I hope he will give his reasons later on. Perhaps he has not looked at the question closely. Grattan's Parliament had Imperial authority; it had the right to deal with questions of peace and war; it had the right to refuse to vote Supplies; it had the right to deal with Trade and Navigation; it had the right to make Treaties if it chose. The chief questions that arose were as to the Regency—and the importance of that I think Mr. Pitt greatly exaggerated; but it was a question to which he attributed very great importance—and as to Trade Laws. But none of the difficulties that could have arisen under Grattan's Parliament can arise under the modification of the Legislative Union now proposed. I want to ask, what is the true test of the unity of the United Kingdom? I suggest, for the consideration of the House, that it means existence under one Kingship, and under one paramount authority. If any better suggestion can be made I will withdraw mine. The noble Lord says it is not the definition of the Act of Union. Where does the noble Lord find any definition in the Act of Union? I find none. I want to point out a mistake the noble Lord has made. The Act begins by reciting that it was necessary to be passed to promote the essential interests of Great Britain and Ireland. It is first enacted that after a day named the two Kingdoms shall be united into one Kingdom, to be named the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The 3rd section provides how the United Kingdom shall be ordered in the matter of legislation. Let me suppose a case. Suppose the 3rd section had said, "the United Kingdom shall be represented in the following Parliaments," and had then proceeded to give a certain limited authority to a local Parliament, would the noble Lord have said it was no longer a United Kingdom? He could not justly so maintain. No doubt, under the Bill, this Parliament ceases to legislate for all purposes for all parts of the United Kingdom; but it continues to be the paramount authority for all purposes, the sole authority for Imperial purposes residing in the paramount authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Now I come to the point raised by the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) on Friday night—that there was no mandate from the constituencies to deal with this question. I do not say the noble Marquess put it so high, but he approached very closely to adopting a doctrine expounded by the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere). I did not know that the hon. Member had so distinguished a follower; but the hon. Member has more than once said in the House—and he is the only one who has—that it was the business of the constituencies to say what laws they wanted, and it was the duty of Members of Parliament simply to pass those laws. I do not think that is the present view taken of this matter by the House; but was not this question before the country? Other hon. Members in the course of the debate will deal with this question; but I have been astonished to see the prominence, in one shape or other, which was given to it in the addresses not only of Liberal, but of Conservative candidates. The Prime Minister, in the scheme which he seeks leave to introduce, is within the lines of his own declaration in his published address to the electors of Mid Lothian, and is within the lines of the first speech which he addressed to them upon this very question. If this question of mandate is to be followed out, I want to ask where it is to end? Is it to be said that a Parliament, newly elected, is to be Dissolved when the responsible Ministers of the day find it necessary to deal upon their responsibility with some urgent question? It seems to me that would be the logical consequence of the position taken up by the noble Lord; but, again, I want to know, who is to put before the country the programme on which the supposed mandate is to be determined? I want to ask the noble Lord, and those who take similar views, whether there was a mandate from the constituencies for a repressive policy? We know, of course, that the Tory Party asked for no such mandate as that, because the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington was then supposed to be in amicable relations with hon. Members who, on his side of the House, sit below the Gangway. He will excuse me if I apply to him the words, very slightly altered—they are common and hackneyed—which were applied to an illustrious personage, who—

> "Stiff in opinion, often in the wrong,
> Everything by starts and nothing long,
> But in the course of one revolving moon,
> Was green and orange, statesman and buffoon."

I think, Sir, that the argument which was advanced with great ability by the noble Marquess is, after all, a dilatory plea, and will not avail. Another ground urged against the scheme of the Prime Minister is the contemplated exclusion of Irish Members in future from this House. It strikes me as a most singular circumstance the sudden affection that has been displayed in so many quarters for the presence of hon. Members from Ireland. I do not think they could have supposed, in the wildest dreams of their imagination, that they were the cherished objects of the affection and regard of the noble Lord, the noble Marquess, my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain), and probably of my right hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen), to say nothing of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James). I am sure they must have been intensely gratified. But it occurred to me what diatribes we should have heard—I do not say from those right hon. Gentlemen, but from some other quarters of the House—had it been proposed to retain the 103 Irish Members in this House, while constituting a local Parliament in Ireland for Irish local purposes. I think it would have been said—"What! a local Parliament in Ireland for local Irish purposes, and the wheels of the legislative machine still to be clogged by the presence of Irish Members at Westminster; what! 103 Members still to be retained here, who are to use their position as a great lever for, it may be, disturbing the permanence or the stability of the settlement sought to be effected by this scheme." For my part, I should be sorry to see—if anyone can suggest a practicable method for avoiding it—Irish Members entirely cease their attendance in this House. If that be the serious objection to this scheme, I hope the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentlemen who desire their presence here will consider and bring their ability to bear on the contrivance of means which will reconcile the presence of the Irish Members here with the establishment, for local purposes, of an Irish Parliament. I wish to point out on this question that my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham pronounced a very strong opinion in 1874 in a sense directly opposite to the contention he advanced on Friday night. On January 29, 1874, the right hon. Gentleman, who was then standing as a candidate for Sheffield, addressed the electors in these terms—

> "He approved of the Home Rule movement; he held that Irishmen had a right to govern themselves and their own affairs, and he was willing to concede it. It would be an advantage to both parties. The Irish would be satisfied"

—and, mark this—

> "and the Legislature would move on at an accelerated pace without the Irish Members. At present they only travelled by Parliamentary train, and that was not quick enough for him."

If my right hon. Friend can show that the inclusion of Irish Members is practically consistent with the object of the scheme which is to recognize the right of the Irish to self-government in Irish matters, I should hope—I have no authority to say so—that the Ministers of the day would be open to consider that point. But then the right hon. Gentleman goes on to say that he regards the exclusion of the Irish Members as degrading to Ireland, and as amounting to taxation without representation. I must beg respecfully to differ from him. It is no violation of the principle that representation ought to accompany taxation if the Representatives of the two countries make the Parliamentary compact which is to be embodied in the proposed Act of Parliament by which there shall be fixed permanently the quota of one to the other for Imperial purposes. And as to degradation, so far as the practical subjects are concerned, and the practical effect upon Ireland is concerned, am I not right in stating it thus—that, so far as the questions of peace or war go, Ireland has never felt that the Irish Members had any effective or controlling voice? As regards those greater questions—greater, I mean, in their applicability to Ireland—of trade and commerce, the Irish Members and the Irish people feel that in the face of public opinion of to-day it would be impossible to recur to trade and navigation laws intended to put down their trade and commerce. Therefore, they feel their interests are safe on these questions, bound up as they are with the greater interests of the Empire. Now, I come to another subject referred to by my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan). It is the contention that the effect of the scheme would be to hand over Ireland—the legislation and government of the country—to the Parnellites. I desire to speak with freedom, and I can speak with independence. I had not the support of the Parnellites when I had the honour of a seat in Ireland, and I had not the honour of their support, but, on the contrary, was opposed by them, when I sought a seat in England. I speak, therefore, without any desire or motive to speak with undue favour or praise of those hon. Members. Nay, I cannot hold language of praise; rather I should have to hold language, if I were called upon to pronounce a judgment, in which, in many respects, censure would be predominant. I do not hesitate to say that many things have been said and done condemnable in the highest degree, and that censure is to be visited upon some of them certainly not alone for things said and done, but also for things left unsaid and undone which ought to have been said and done. But is there no allowance to be made? How many hon. Members opposite have been in prison, and in prison upon charges for which they never were tried, which they never definitely knew, which they never had the opportunity of answering in the face of day, and which it never was intended they should have the opportunity of answering? The story of Irish representation is a sad and not altogether a creditable one. When the noble Lord suggested to-night, in the tone of Mr. Micawber, to wait, to look out, perhaps, for the Irish Party falling to pieces, for something to turn up—that is the noble Lord's plan of statesmanship—I was thinking of that melancholy story of how Irish Members were for years returned to this Parliament, and came here patriotic bands, soon to be broken up, because soon to be corrupted. I recollect how they took their sides at one period with the greatest decorum upon each side of the House, and under the wings of the great Parties in the House. The formation of O'Connell's Party was followed by the Young Ireland movement and vague suggestions of an appeal to force. Then an independent Opposition Party was constituted; but it soon fell to pieces, and the outcome of that was the Fenian movement of 1866-7. Then we come to the Home Rule movement, which has continued to this day, and which was begun, as I know, in an hotel in Dublin in 1870, at which the four principal persons were Mr. Isaac Butt, a Protestant, Professor Galbraith, a Protestant, and two ex-members of the Corporation of Dublin, one of whom had been Lord Mayor, and both of whom were of the same religion. It must be admitted that the members of that Party have not shown themselves to be open to corrupting or Party influences, and that they have acted as if they had the interests of their country at heart. In consequence of their efforts, seconded by an improved and intelligent public opinion in England on the Irish Question, a great advance has been made in the direction of good legislation for Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Trevelyan) draws a fearful picture of the future Legislature in Ireland, and he draws a still more appalling picture of the state of things in Ireland at this day, always excepting the loyal minority. I ask the House to consider whether there could be a more damning commentary on our government and our legislation of 86 years? I say that if it should turn out, as I do not believe it will, that the Parnellite Party, as it is called, should be the great force in the future of Ireland, that will be the fault of those who are the natural leaders of the people in Ireland by position, by education, and by intelligence, and as to whom it remains a condemnation that they have not taken sides with the people, and that they have not been in sympathy with the people to direct and control their efforts. National politics have been unfashionable in Ireland. But if this scheme becomes law, and if hon. Members opposite below the Gangway find themselves in Ireland in a responsible position, let me remind the House that responsibility makes a wondrous change. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington is a conspicuous instance of that. Hon. Members must remember the change which came over the noble Lord when he found himself invested with the responsibilities of Office; and I should feel surprised if a similar change did not come over the Irish Members in their new position. I now desire to say something on the question of Ulster in relation to this scheme. I am sure the House will carefully consider objections to the scheme coming from Ulster as from any other quarter; but I hope the House will not listen to the teachings of the noble Lord or give countenance to the language of some hon. Members, that if Parliament should, in its wisdom, give legislative effect to the scheme, yet it will be disregarded by a section of the people in Ireland. It seems sometimes to be supposed that Ulster is a country inhabited by an entirely different race and by a people professing an entirely different religion. Why, Sir, I defy any man in this House—and I speak particularly of Members from Ulster—to draw a plan of even a section of a county in the whole of Ulster in which section there would not be comprised persons of all the religions in Ireland — certainly of the Protestant, Presbyterian, and Catholic religions. The varieties of race will also be found there. In the whole Province of Ulster there are only two counties—namely, Down and Antrim—where the Catholics are not in excess of any other one religious denomination. But then it is said that in Ulster Protestants and Orangemen have built up the prosperity of the country; and this is adduced as a reason why special weight should be given to representations from Ulster, and because of that prosperity which is unduly attributed to religion and race. It was in Ulster mainly that the plantation settlements were made when it was intended to place in Ireland a new population and a new race representing a new religion. It was in Ulster, also, that there sprang up a trade in which England did not compete with Ireland—namely, the linen trade; and the enormous trade in the ports of the Clyde caused Belfast, by its proximity, to derive benefit from Scotch prosperity. From these three causes mainly sprang the exceptional prosperity of Ulster. Although the landlords filched what they could from the tenant farmers, who by the terms of the settlement were supposed to be rooted in the soil, yet a substantial remnant of those rights remained. But I dismiss the subject by saying this—that I claim on behalf of the Catholic Celts of Ulster that they have, according to their means and circumstances, contributed their fair share to the prosperity of the Province. Does the House know—for I speak of what I know, being an Ulster man myself—that in the management of Ulster estates—I do not speak of exceptions, but I speak of the whole—a Catholic had no chance of getting a desirable farm if a Protestant or a Presbyterian could be had as a tenant? The result was that the worst land, and in the worst places, fell to their lot; and in the North of Ireland to this day, and in the South of Ireland to this day, the Catholics are known by the name of the "mountainy men," because they had to go to the barren lands of the mountains and try to push fertility up the hill. I once heard a distinguished man in Ireland—Professor Sullivan, of the Queen's College, Cork—affirm that if a geological map of Ireland were given to him he could construct from it a religious map. By that he meant that the Catholics found their places on the bad and the Protestant population on the good land. I admit the intelligence of a great many of the people of Ulster, except on one point. I am afraid that when it comes to questions of religious difference their views are still narrow. I am afraid that a great many of them have not yet made up their minds that the days of religious ascendancy have gone—that they have not yet made up their minds to the fact that their poorest Catholic brethren are entitled to the same equal political rights as they are. But I think that if this measure should become law, whatever may be the protest they may now make, if they know that their lives are to be spent together, and that they have a country which they must for the future deal with in common, I cannot but think that the real patriotism which resides in the breast of every man will be evoked, and that the Ulster Orangemen as well as the Ulster Catholics will add their contribution to the common fund of intelligence, energy, and freedom, and give to this scheme of the Government a fair chance of success. I will not trouble the House with many more observations; but there is one other subject upon which, if I am not wearying them too much, I should like to say a word. ["Go on, go on!"] I do not stop to consider the question of the land scheme, which is not before the House. But my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain), while he was understood to start away from a suggestion of a scheme by which there might be a contingent liability on the British Exchequer for money secured for the purpose of buying out the landlords, is supposed to have committed himself to the approval of a scheme which contemplated not the giving of a security which might or might not be resorted to, but the payment once and for all of a large sum of money. And I should have liked to ask the right hon. Gentleman how does he start away from this measure on the ground that it puts a burden on the British taxpayer—a contingent liability, I rather ought to say—when he seemed to have no difficulty in supporting a measure that would directly impose such a burden of a considerable amount? I refer to his approval of the Giffen scheme. But, passing from that, I now come to the remaining observations to which I would invite the earnest attention of the House. Practically all Parties in this House admit that something must be done on this question. You have tried to govern Ireland, and you have failed. Is it not time that you allowed Ireland to try to govern herself? You have tried a repressive policy for years; and, if one can speak of favourable conditions in relation to such a policy, you have tried it under favourable conditions. You have had in late years at your service for that policy two of the ablest men whom you could have set to the work—I allude to the late Mr. Forster and Earl Spencer. And although I myself in this House spoke in condemnation of what I believed to be his wrong policy, I cannot mention the name of Mr. Forster without bearing my tribute of admiration to his courage under adverse circumstances, and stating my opinion that no man ever went to Ireland with a more thorough desire to do his duty, or a sincerer hope to do good than Mr. Forster. Of Earl Spencer it would be an impertinence in me to speak; but the more you exalt the attributes and ability of these men the more conspicuous does the failure of the policy pursued by them become. What was the result of Mr. Forster's policy? I use no words of my own to describe it. You recollect it in the announcement of Earl Cowper—that they had succeeded in driving Irish discontent beneath the surface. Is that to be the sum and substance of British statesmanship? And I ask the House solemnly to consider whether the fact that Earl Spencer has lent the high and weighty sanction of his name to this scheme is not the best and the strongest proof that he, who has had officially the best means of judging, has come to the conclusion that at last the policy of repression is worn out, and that something different and, let us hope, better ought to be put in its place? It is the vice of a policy of repression that it operates only with continual force. It is like the weight on a spring. Remove the weight and the spring rebounds, unless it be that you break the spring. Have you broken the spirit of the Irish people? Does not the fact that Ireland now returns 85 Members who speak with one voice on this question, and that the Irish people have from time to time ever since the Union entered and continued their protest against the present system, show that they have always claimed to have a separate Legislature and Government to deal with matters which concern them, but which do not touch Imperial questions? If this measure is not passed to-day and Parliament refuses it, will Parliament refuse it to-morrow or next year? Is this a question which is to be allowed to remain open as a subject to be put up to auction to the highest bidder? I ask hon. Members who are anxious for the credit of Parliament, anxious for the honour of public men, is it, or is it not, to be allowed to remain in that position? The question is no longer whether the thing is to be done; but whether it is to be done now, and in what form. And when the justice and the practicability of such a scheme as this is recognized by a responsible Cabinet—when the dissentient Liberals dissent only as to the mode, the degree, and the time—when the Conservatives have no policy, no alternative to this, but a policy of repression, is it not right that this measure shall be passed, and passed in a generous spirit, and passed in a way which is likely to attain the object for which it is passed? If passed now in a generous spirit, I think there is a strong hope—I venture to say strong probability—that it will be received by Ireland in a thorough spirit of friendliness, and that in Ireland matters will moderate and arrange themselves. Postpone it until there is military repression, or repression of some other sort, and the thing will still have to be done; but it will have to be done under conditions infinitely worse, accompanied by greater embitterment between races and classes in Ireland, and with diminished hopes of complete international friendliness. Sir, I have spoken with earnestness because I feel deeply on this subject; and I ask hon. Members, even if they do not approve in all details the scheme of the Prime Minister, whether they do not think that, instead of belittling this question, the Prime Minister has placed it on a higher plane and in a purer atmosphere, and has propounded a scheme at least worthy of the great subject he dealt with? I believe that in this scheme will be found the means of ending a state of things which is intolerable—intolerable to Ireland, intolerable to England, injurious to the name and fame and greatness of this Empire. It is, Sir, because I believe that this happy result may be attained by this scheme, if rightly considered and dealt with, that with all the earnestness of which I am capable I ask for it from this House and from the country a fair, an honest, an anxious, a dispassionate, and a generous consideration.

Mr. FINCH-HATTON (Lincolnshire, Spalding) said, that the hon. and learned Gentleman who last addressed the House devoted the first part of his speech to proving that the Act of Union ought not to have been passed; but he devoted almost all the last part to proving that the Bill now proposed would not effect the repeal of that Act. The challenge of the hon. and learned Gentleman to the Opposition to propound an alternative policy was one which any hon. Member, no matter how humble, ought to try to answer if he thought he was able to do so. As he (Mr. Finch-Hatton) thought there was an alternative policy, both to the policy of coercion which had been tried and failed, and also to the policy propounded by the Prime Minister, he trusted the House would allow him to place his views before it. Before doing that, and conscious that he was taking part in a great historic debate, and had no right to go into details which had already been so ably dealt with by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), he would ask the House one question as to the principle which was involved in this Bill, and which he considered as involving an insurmountable constitutional difficulty—he meant representation without taxation. These, according to the present measure, were, for the first time in our history, to be divorced. Was it not the insistance on this very principle which had lost them their American Colonies? Was the Prime Minister prepared to go back on our history and re-assert that principle? If so, he (Mr. Finch-Hatton) would ask hon. Gentlemen from Ireland whether they were prepared to consent, in the name of their country, to give up their birthright in this matter? The Attorney General said there would be no violation of the spirit of the Constitution if the present arrangement were made between the two countries, because Ireland was a consenting party to it. He (Mr. Finch-Hatton) denied the power of the Representatives of this generation to do anything that would exclude succeeding generations from representation here for all time. Was this to be a final arrangement by which Ireland was to pay taxes and cease to be represented in the British

House of Commons? If it was not to be a final arrangement, then every reason for the introduction of the Bill fell to the ground; if it were so intended, how long could even the most sanguine person expect that that settlement would endure? There was something very suspicious about the manner in which this Bill had been introduced to the notice of Parliament. The Attorney General had said that the question of Home Rule was before the constituencies of Great Britain at the last General Election; but the fact was that 114 Members who sat behind the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister had pledged themselves to vote against Home Rule. Would they say what they thought of this new departure? The right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) had declared that the Cabinet had not been consulted upon the principles of this measure in accordance with Constitutional usage. It was not necessary that he (Mr. Finch-Hatton) should describe the extraordinary *volte face* performed by the Prime Minister in bringing in this measure. There was no parallel for this transaction, except one—namely, an incident in the life of an individual as arbitrary as the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone), but more guided by Constitutional precedent — he meant Henry VIII. It was not until he was enamoured of Anne Boleyn; it was not until she told him that the only way to her chamber was through the Church, that he began to have doubts of the validity of his marriage, and sought for the divorce he afterwards obtained. In like manner, it was not until the right hon. Gentleman became enamoured of power, and realized that he could not obtain it without the aid of the Irish vote, that he converted himself to the belief in that divorce between England and Ireland which he now asked the House to pronounce simply for the gratification of his personal ambition. He (Mr. Finch-Hatton) would say, as he believed they would have said to Henry VIII.—"Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder." How had this question been pressed upon the country from an Irish point of view? He was far from saying, or believing, that Home Rule in certain countries and under certain conditions might not be very advantageously granted. There was the example of North Queensland. She was seeking for Home Rule and separation from South Queensland; but under what different conditions to Ireland? Her voice was Constitutionally expressed, and in no other way. Her inhabitants were men who had wrested immense territory from nature and converted it into a fertile Province. They had proved their right to govern themselves by first obeying the laws before trying to make them; and he hoped that when the case came before the House of Commons the House would give it the consideration to which it was entitled, and grant the appeal. The object which North Queensland had in seeking separation was very different to that of Ireland. It was to take her place in the great Australian Federation as a nation. Capital was being attracted to the country; but the very moment Home Rule was talked of in connection with Ireland, capital fled from there as rats from a sinking ship. Instead of a Constitutional agitation they had had Home Rule recommended from the Irish point of view—by an agitation kept up by American money from a Fenian source. The Chief Secretary had spoken of a "contingent sedition and hypothetical coercion;" but in Ireland at this moment they had sedition which was not contingent, and coercion which was not hypothetical, and they were both joined in the National League. If there were hypothesis it was that they would gain their object by sedition; and if there were a contingency it was that they would go on till that object was gratified. The right hon. Gentleman's speech was really an abuse of terms. He wished the country would awake to the common sense which used to make them call things by their proper names. It was an abuse of language to say that that was not coercion which prevented men from fulfilling the ordinary business of life, which prevented supplies being given to those in need of them, which prevented medical assistance being extended to women in their direst extremity, and sometimes even prevented the due burial of the dead. It was all very well for Irish Members to stand in front of the Chamber of Horrors and try to prevent Englishmen from going in. But they had it on unimpeachable authority that it was a chamber of blood, of murder, of unmentionable disgrace; and the time was coming, he hoped, when in spite of all the efforts that might be made

England would break up that accursed conspiracy against law and order, even if all the forces of hell should support it. Now, the state of Ireland, as it was described by the Prime Minister, was totally different from the state of the same country as described by the Chief Secretary. The Prime Minister said that, at the present moment, they were in that country at the low water mark of agrarian crime; whereas the Chief Secretary informed the House that so serious was the state of the country that unless Members consented to pass this Act outrage and dynamite might shortly be expected to follow refusal. There was one means, and one only, of reconciling the two statements. Who was it that was keeping outrage at the low water mark? Was it the authority of the Queen or of the Land League, and what was it that would cause a recrudescence of outrage and dynamite—who was it, if it was not those people who, for their own purposes, were persuading the country to a temporary cessation of outrage? [*Cries of* "Shame!"] He saw no way of reconciling the two statements but the way that he had indicated. Hon. Members from Ireland should show to the House, and to the country, what had not been shown — that there was another explanation. They were told that coercion had failed in Ireland. He thought they ought to clear their minds of the illusory sense in which the word "coercion" had been used. Exactly the same arguments might apply to their dealings with the criminal classes. There was coercion in every civilized community directed against persons breaking the law. They might as well say that coercion against the criminal classes had failed because they had not entirely put down crime, and criminals still existed, and that we must at once adopt one of two alternatives—either effectual coercion, which would mean hanging criminals as soon as they were caught, or else give the autonomy and Home Rule. They were told that Irish credit would require a great deal of nursing. He did not wonder at that. But the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) proposed that England should be the wet nurse. When was that promising bantling likely to be weaned? He was afraid it would be a very long time before Ireland would be able to do without that nutrition which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to give her. He would endeavour to take up the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman, and prove that there was an alternative policy. The problem they had to solve was how they could satisfy the aspirations of Ireland for Home Rule without endangering the State. They must first secure the safety of the Empire. Ireland must cease to be the battle-ground of Party. Both the great Parties in the State must combine to pass just and good laws for the government of Ireland, and, having passed those laws, to maintain them and execute them. They should place in Ireland a Viceroy who should no longer be liable to be removed when the Party he represented went out of Office, but who should share the confidence of both the great Parties in the House. The next thing to be accomplished was the Imperial Federation. Under that system, which could not be obtained in a day, he believed it would be possible to have an Imperial Parliament sitting at Westminster in which every part of the Empire should be represented according to the burden which they bore of Imperial taxation. With that Imperial authority they might safely concede Home Rule, not only to Ireland, but to Scotland and Wales, and even England. He believed that would be an entire solution, not only of this question, but of many other great questions that affected the Empire. Under that system Ireland would no longer be a suppliant for English justice; but would thank Heaven that on this great historic occasion her Representatives were not allowed to sell her birthright for the mess of pottage—that birthright which was the greatest any nation or individual could aspire to, the citizenship of the Greater Britain which he had described.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth) said, he wished, before the debate was brought to an end, to say a few words in support of the Motion now before the House. For his part, he thanked the Prime Minister for having made an attempt to settle this most difficult question. If he succeeded in the effort it would add even to his renown; and if, unhappily, he failed, it would not discredit him, or diminish his reputation, to have made an honest attempt in so good a cause. He (Mr. Burt) addressed the House as a Home Ruler. When he came forward as a candidate for a seat in the House of Commons in 1874 he declared himself in sympathy with the principle of Home

Rule. He voted on several occasions, or at least on some occasions, with the late Mr. Butt and others when they brought the question before the House. He confessed he did not always see clearly how Home Rule could be practically carried into effect. But the principle which he contended for was the right of Irishmen to have a Legislative Body—he was not afraid to call it a Parliament—on Irish soil to dispose of entirely Irish affairs; and with that principle he was still in entire accord. He thought that the scheme now before the House would, at any rate, afford a fair basis for putting the principle into practical operation. He was quite aware that objections might be made to the Prime Minister's plan. He supposed there was nothing human that could not be criticized. There were parts of the proposal with which he was himself not entirely satisfied. The part he disliked most, he confessed, was the provision to exclude Irishmen entirely from that House. He quite admitted the force of the position taken by the Prime Minister. He saw that it would be utterly impracticable to make a distinction between Imperial and national or local affairs; and he admitted that if Irishmen came to that House they must come with the full and equal powers that were vested in the hands of other Members. He felt encouraged by the powerful speech of the Attorney General to hope that the Prime Minister and the Government would not consider that a vital part of their scheme; but that they would be prepared to accept some method of maintaining what he would call a visible and outward tie between England and Ireland in the shape of some sort of representation of Ireland in this House of Parliament. There were other objections that he would not dwell upon. As a Radical, for instance, to him the property qualification was certainly distasteful. He thought that a provision of that sort was out of date; but it was for Irishmen rather than for him to object to it. The new scheme had this great advantage—that nearly all of it was to some extent representative, and that was more than could be said of some parts of our own system. He was very well pleased with one portion of the speech of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Finch-Hatton). He seemed to feel that this was not a question to be disposed of by mere negations, and that it was necessary to suggest some alternative policy. The Bill before the House had been criticized very severely, and properly so. It was their business to criticize, to dissect, and to find out the weak spots of any scheme brought before the House. But, with all respect to the noble Lord who opened the debate that night (Lord Randolph Churchill), he thought it would be admitted that by far the most effective criticism had proceeded from the Ministerial side of the House. There were two speeches that he listened to with very much interest—that of his right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), and that of his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain). He regretted deeply that they should have found it necessary to sever their connection with the Government. He need not say that he (Mr. Burt) disapproved entirely of the harsh criticisms to which they had been subjected, and the bad motives that had been imputed to them on account of the action they had taken. He knew both of them well; he admired them both; and he was perfectly satisfied that nothing but the deepest conviction of duty would have induced them to take such a step at such a time. Their vindication of their severance from the Government was complete. To his mind, he could not see how they could, as honest men, have retained their connection with the present Government. But he confessed he was still more puzzled to understand how, with their views and with their keenness of vision, they should have ever seen their way to join and take part in the Government. Their criticisms of the Bill were effective, as they might have expected they would be coming from such able and skilled debaters; but they were both too much imbued with the instincts of statesmen to rest satisfied with mere negative criticism. They felt bound, with their objections, to propound to the House an alternative policy; and he never saw a more conspicuous instance of how easy it was to criticize and how difficult it was to construct. What was their alternative policy? He would not attempt to criticize it in detail, lest he himself should be asked to produce an alternative scheme. Taking warning by their example, and not having an alternative scheme of his own, he would rest satisfied with only one or two remarks. There was this defect in both their schemes—both of them, in their criticisms which they had launched against the scheme of the Prime Minister, laboured under this great disadvantage; under the fatal defect that their schemes were not asked for, and there was every reason to believe they would not be accepted, by the Irish people. [*Cheers.*] He was confirmed in his opinion by that response from hon. Gentlemen opposite. His right hon. Friend (Mr. Chamberlain) suggested a Royal Commission. Well, there appeared in the newspapers of that day the Report of a Royal Commission of which he (Mr. Burt) was a Member, and that Commission had sat for seven years. It had not been idle; it had been dealing with a very difficult and complex question; but a question much more easy of solution, he thought, than that of the relationship between Great Britain and Ireland. His right hon. Friend had also spoken of Federation, of which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Finch-Hatton) had drawn a very poetic description. The hon. Gentleman seemed to see visions of a grand future when the British Empire should be federated, and when they would have Members from every part of the Empire assembled in the House. Well, he (Mr. Burt) liked the idea. It was very attractive to him; but he would point out that, so far, it was a simple vision, and they could not really wait. They were dealing with a practical question that had forced itself on the attention of the country; and it was impossible to wait until the whole British Empire was ripe for Federation before they attempted to grapple with and settle this great and difficult question. His right hon. Friend (Mr. Chamberlain) spoke about difficulties of race and religion, and said that Ireland was not a homogeneous nation; that Ireland was two nations; and he confessed, for himself, as one in favour of the principle of Home Rule, that that had seemed a great difficulty in dealing with Ireland; but he recognized the fact that the difficulty was considerably lessened by the result of the last General Election. What did they see then? Not only 86 Members returned from Ireland as supporters of the movement; but from the North of Ireland — if he was not mistaken, from Ulster itself — there was a majority of Nationalist Members. That was a very important fact, and it seemed to him that any man who believed in representative Government, who trusted the people—and many of the objections raised in this discussion had been directed against the very basis of representative Government, and had shown utter distrust of the people both of Great Britain and Ireland—he could not understand how any man who believed in representative Government, who trusted the people, could refuse to recognize the extraordinary result of the last General Election, at any rate so far as the representation of Ireland was concerned. His right hon. Friend also spoke of the necessity of having a real and not a sham Union between the two countries, and implied that the scheme of the Prime Minister would produce simply a sham Union. What did the right hon. Gentleman call the present Union? Was it a Union to his entire satisfaction? He (Mr. Burt) believed it was not; in fact, his right hon. Friend's alternative scheme showed that it was not. British force could do a great deal; but there was one thing that even British force could not do. It could not make a real and genuine union between one people and another. That was only possible on a moral basis. It was only possible by winning the affection, the trust, the confidence, and the goodwill of the people that had to be brought under the Government. He had said all he had to say, and thanked the House for the kindness with which it had heard him. It was always with great reluctance he obtruded himself on the attention of the House; but they had reached a time when men with convictions must definitely take sides and speak out honestly what they thought. He had chosen his side. He had made up his mind. He took his side in favour of a thorough and complete union between the two countries. He thanked the Prime Minister for having brought this question forward and put it in a practical shape. The right hon. Gentleman was surrounded by great difficulties. No man knew better than himself what they were. As the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) had said, there were passion and prejudice. Yes; and there were the hatreds and the enmities of centuries, one might say. There were the doubts and misgivings of friends, as well as the bitter hostility of opponents. Able and trusted

Leaders who had stood by the side of the Prime Minister in many hard-fought battles had refused to join him now; others equally trusted and equally able were leaving his side. He (Mr. Burt) did not blame them. The Prime Minister could not be indifferent to those signs; but he trusted, and he believed, he was not dismayed. In the face of all these difficulties it was impossible to tell what would be the fate of this Bill. It might be delayed and checked in that House. It might be rejected "elsewhere;" but there was another tribunal to which the right hon. Gentleman could appeal, the power that made and unmade Ministries and Parliaments, and which even an unrepresentative Assembly, however high its rank, and however ancient its traditions, could not ignore. Let the right hon. Gentleman appeal to that greater tribunal; and he (Mr. Burt) was much mistaken if the verdict of the overwhelming majority of the people of Great Britain and Ireland did not pronounce in favour of this great measure of pacification and reconciliation.

MR. JENNINGS (Stockport) said, he wished to look at the question apart from Party. He was in favour of making just and generous concessions to Ireland, believing that the Irish people had a perfect right to manage their own affairs and to fill up their own local offices, and to have the amplest scope for building up those industries which England had destroyed. He would have been heartily rejoiced if he could have supported, as at one time he had hoped to be able to support, the measure of the Prime Minister; but, unfortunately, it seemed to him that the scope of the measure covered far more than the points to which he had referred. It was, in effect, a measure for the Repeal of the Union, accompanied by a payment to the Irish people for the privilege of allowing the Union to be repealed. They had had it admitted that night very frankly by the Attorney General that this Bill was practically a Repeal of the Union, and it had been said that that Union had been consummated by fraud and corruption. In that he cordially agreed with the hon. and learned Gentleman; and he maintained that no man could conscientiously say one word for the method by which that Bill had been passed. But this was something more than a measure for the Repeal of the Union. It proposed to confer on the Irish Parliament powers which Grattan's Parliament had never possessed; they had been told by the Prime Minister that it was to have the control of the Executive Government of Ireland as well as of legislative business. In considering this question with great attention the first thing that had presented itself to his mind was that this measure had been brought in by one who undoubtedly was a great genius, but one who for nearly 20 years had had the government of Ireland under his control, and whose record was one of utter and calamitous failure. If what the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the Attorney General stated was true, then the history of the legislation of the right hon. Gentleman was about as disastrous as any that this or any other country could show. Every one of his great measures had been heralded with the same promises of success and the same brilliant visions which dazzled so many of them on Thursday last. The Disestablishment of the Irish Church was to be the great panacea for healing the wrongs of centuries of oppression. Then in 1870 the Irish Land Bill was to unite Irishmen with Englishmen and Scotchmen in the enduring ties of freewill and affection; and the right hon. Gentleman also predicted that peace, order, and settled industries would diffuse their blessings from year to year, and day to day, over a smiling land. Was that fulfilled? Again, in 1881, upon the introduction of the second Land Bill, the same promises were given by the Prime Minister, who said that justice was to be their guide, and that walking in that path they could not err; that guided by that divine light they were safe; while every step they took brought them nearer to the goal. The next step which the Prime Minister took, and which was to bring them nearer to the goal he had promised, was the introduction of the most outrageous Coercion Bill ever passed by the House of Commons. The Home Rulers must sometimes have unpleasant recollections of the days when the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) denounced them in that House in language more bitter than had ever been heard before. The right hon. Gentleman, in moving the Coercion Bill of 1882, said—

> "There is a cancerous sore in Ireland. . . . It is the sore which springs from the baneful venom of secret societies and unlawful combinations. To that foul disease it is necessary that the surgeon's knife should be applied. We have to cauterize and to extirpate it."—(3 *Hansard*, [269] 463.)

Was this a step nearer the goal? He urged that there was no ground for hoping that the predictions they heard on Thursday night were more likely to be verified than the predictions which had preceded it. Sweeping as this measure was, it yet fell short of the demands made by the Irish Party, owing to the refusal to place the Customs and Excise under the control of the new Legislature. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) himself had said that no Parliamentary Assembly would work satisfactorily which had not such power of raising revenue for the purposes of the government of Ireland as seemed fitting and best to that Assembly. That, no doubt, was a right which an independent Legislature must possess, just as this Parliament possessed it. The Leaders of the Irish Party had used no deceit; they had been frank and candid on almost every occasion. On the 21st of January of the present year the hon. Member for the City of Cork had told a meeting that it was impossible, with consistency, to place a specific limit to the advance of that country, that no man had the right to fix the boundaries of a nation, or to say—"Thus far shalt thou go and no further;" that they had never endeavoured to fix a *ne plus ultra*, and never would. That was not only fair and candid, but it was the view of reason and of common sense. One consideration which they must bear in mind was that of the formidable difficulties which would inevitably arise from the action of the great body of Irish Americans. If this Bill granted to Ireland a free and independent Parliamentary Assembly with full powers over the Executive, as proposed by the Prime Minister, there would inevitably come a time when either the payment of the interest due, or some other cause, would bring the Irish Parliament into antagonism with this one. If they were to endeavour to demand what was necessary, whether payment of interest or what not, and to threaten to use force, could anyone suppose that the great body of Irish Americans would stand by silently and see that done? He believed that the United States would say to them—"You have acknowledged your incompetence to govern Ireland; you have given her practical independence, now you must take your hand off her; we will not stand by and see her crushed." He believed that there was no Government in the United States which could withstand such pressure as that which would be brought to bear on it by the Irish Americans, especially if a Presidential election were near. He was anxious on Friday night to hear something from the Chief Secretary for Ireland to remove his fears; but the speech of the right hon. Gentleman was an appeal to their fears—an appeal which ought not to have been addressed to the House of Commons. Brief as his experience of that Body was, he had come to the conclusion that it was the worst Body in the world to attempt to intimidate by threats or by the suggestion of some dark and unknown evils. Whatever the fate of this Bill might be, he believed that the just and reasonable aspirations of the Irish people would be fulfilled. He believed that in some way or other good local government for Ireland would be established, and that there would yet be an influx of capital into that country. [*A laugh.*] Without capital the industries which ought to be built up in Ireland could not be created. He believed the Irish cause, within just and reasonable limits, would triumph, even though this Bill should fail; and he did not hesitate to avow that his sympathies were with the Irish cause. He would support any measure, from whichever side of the House it proceeded, which had a tendency to promote the triumph of that cause consistently with the stability and the honour of his own native land.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, that he and everyone else must recognize that the page opened by the Prime Minister could not be closed without a solution of this question. He regretted the bitterness which had characterized many of the speeches delivered in the course of the debate. For any measure to succeed at all, it must be welcomed generously from all parts of the House, and not made a question of Party strife. He was glad to hear the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) repudiate the doctrine that this question could any longer be used for mere Party purposes, because the noble Lord, having tried the experiment, must know the bitterness of the failure in connection with it. There were only two suggestions for dealing with the Irish problem. The one was that they should use sufficient force to punish crime and repress discontent. The other was that they should take such measures, and prepare such remedies, as might diminish the crime and remove the causes of the discontent. Let them, by remedying the mischief out of which the crime had grown, rob the crime of public sympathy; and let them remove the criminal from the possibility of the moral support of his countrymen, by redressing the mischief which hitherto the Irish people believed the men whom we called criminals had been trying to avenge. It was because he believed that the Prime Minister had sought a remedy that he intended, inside and outside the House, to give him his most loyal support. But he trusted the right hon. Gentleman would pardon him for saying that on some points he gave it with great doubt and hesitation. He had been long a Home Ruler; but he never dreamt that they should dismiss from the Parliament of the nation any portion of the Representatives of Ireland. He had some hope, from words which fell from the Attorney General, that there might be a possibility, while the measure was still under consideration, of reconciling the remedy with what he conceived to be political justice. If Irishmen accepted their exclusion, he would not stand in the way; but he should give his vote in grief, for fear that in taking this step they would be doing a most grievous injustice to the principles of popular representation. What he would say to Gentlemen opposite, and Gentlemen on that side who disagreed with the Prime Minister, was, what would they do? The question was one which they could not avoid. At the last General Election the voice of Ireland overwhelmingly declared that the question must be solved in some fashion, and it was the duty of the House to solve it. This Irish Question could not be avoided nor evaded. Nor ought they to try to avoid it, even if they could. It was the duty of Englishmen and Scotchmen to remember that much of the state of Ireland resulted from their neglect and misgovernment. As long as this question was unsettled, it would stand in the way of many a reform which hon. Gentlemen opposite did not wish for, but which Liberals and Radicals desired. Perhaps for that very reason hon. Gentlemen opposite desired to keep alive the question. His difficulty was that he had not two measures to choose between. If this remedy was imperfect, what remedy had anyone else to offer? The right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) proposed to maintain law and order by means of the Central Government represented in the Imperial Parliament. To maintain law and order had been their constant cry; but how could they do so when the people hated the law? He had not much experience of Ireland—[*Ironical Opposition cheers*]—but he had had more than some of those who interrupted him, and he had seen enough of its suffering and misery. It had been his misfortune, years ago, to have been one of an armed force at an eviction in Ireland, to protect the civil officers, when the houses of the tenantry were being cleared away at the instance of some gentlemen who now denounced all remedies. The right hon. Member for the Border Burghs would maintain law and order; but he did not tell the House how. The Prime Minister had told them that for more than 50 years there had been scarcely a break in repressive measures. They had made men miserable, vengeful, and mad by a course of oppression such as scarcely any other civilized country in the world had endured. To tell the House that they must maintain law and order without giving some clue as to how that law and order were to be maintained, was, in view of the experience of the past half-century, the merest mockery. They were told that they should maintain law and order by a Central Government; but that had been their system, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) gave the authority of his name by an important preface to a work containing a denunciation of that system in the following words:—

> "If the object of government were to paralyze local effort, to annihilate local responsibility, and daily to give emphasis to the fact that the whole country is under the domination of an alien race, no system could be devised more likely to secure its object than that now in force in Ireland. We hold that the continuance of such a system is unjust to Ireland, useless to England, and dangerous to both. It has irri-

> tated Ireland almost beyond endurance, and it has resulted in preventing the Imperial Parliament from giving its attention to many reforms of which England stands in need."

That was published on the eve of the General Election. England had tried to maintain "law and order" for a century; but those tortured by their system had left grandchildren who cursed English rule to-day, and who would never accept it. Irishmen had a sense of vengeance because of the sufferings inflicted on them and their fathers. Hon. Members opposite were not the cause of the discontent; they did not create it; they were the effect of it. Up to 1829, and for 150 years before, England, by Party religious laws, had maintained "law and order" so cruelly that the present Lord Chief Justice, in a Judgment delivered from the Bench, described it as a disgrace to their civilization, and it was indeed so bad that it would not be tolerated by any people possessed of the power to revolt against it. Until 1844 they persevered with those laws. They had been told that the Irish movements failed continually. It was not true. England killed, crushed by law, by prison, by force, by military; but out of the graves of those who were killed arose new leaders with new energy. Bitter attacks—chiefly founded on pamphlets circulated by the Loyal and Patriotic Union—were made on the Parnellite Members, but these were not the cause or root of Irish disaffection; they were its fruit and effect. They were not the first who had been described as causing Irish disaffection; and, unless we dealt remedially instead of repressively, they would not be the last. In 1844, in the Four Courts, Dublin, when the Central Government maintained "law and order" against the peaceful and Constitutional agitation of Daniel O'Connell, Mr. Whiteside, afterwards one of the Irish Judges, said—

> "They tell you peace is disturbed, order broken, by the excesses of turbulent demagogues. No doubt there might be a seeming peace, a death-like still, by repressing the feelings and passions of men. A peace that springs from terror, and a silence sullen and begotten of despair."

The policy of the Opposition in suppressing fair agitation was the policy which resulted in the silence of despair, and which bore fruit in secret conspiracies. It would seek vengeance, and it would meet with the usual reward. A great deal had been said of the Irish Americans. Why did they send their money so freely? Many years ago he saw men in rags and poverty, with their wives and children, trudging along the dusty roads to Cork, where they were to embark. They had appealed to the House, but got no answer. They petitioned in vain; and now they had retained affection enough for those at home to send money home to help in Parliamentary agitation, as well as to help their relatives to live in reasonable comfort, For men who would do this there was a reasonable hope that if the hand was held out to them they would accept it; but there must be patience and generosity on both sides. Unless Parliament came to some practical solution of the difficulty the very discussions now being held would entitle Ireland to speak louder than before. So long as the people were made to hate law, law could not be maintained. Intense hate and a deep despair would have been the only result of the miserable repressive legislation in which the late Government proposed to seek refuge—that despair which sought vengeance underground, and in Russia and other countries where despotism prevailed resorted to means that all must deplore—because the course of Constitutional agitation was arrested, and Constitutional agitators were punished. [*Opposition murmurs.*] He did not expect courtesy or attention from Conservative Members; but he knew that the Prime Minister would listen while he told him that men out-of-doors wanted the ever-recurring Irish problem finally settled, so that English, Scotch, and Welsh legislation might be possible, and that they trusted to the Liberal Leaders to settle it. They had no faith in the Conservatives, who came to the House blind and helpless with their Lord Lieutenant thrown over, with no Chief Secretary, first waiting in ignorance for knowledge, and then with only a prison as a policy; and it was notorious that the noble Lord whom the Party so much relied upon (Lord Randolph Churchill) had changed his tactics on this question almost as many times as the Government with which he was connected was in Office weeks. He would tell the House that the people outside trusted the Prime Minister, and were willing to go with him even further than they could see, in the hope that his keener and more far-reaching vision perceived a permanent solution and remedy; and they looked to him to crown a long life of public service—the last 25 years of which had tended more and more towards liberty—by taking away a source of discord, and uniting in a bond of real unity the peoples of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland.

Major SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): Sir, a great legislative experiment is about to be tried, or proposed to be tried, in Ireland, and as I am one of those about to be experimented upon, I think I have at least the right to ask the indulgence of the House for a short time. It is no new question to Irish Members—this question of Home Rule. It has been for some years now before the country, and Irish Members know exactly each other's minds about it. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) is the incarnation, at the present moment, of Home Rule in its true sense, and, although differing from the hon. Member very widely, I am bound to admit that he has always acted in this matter with perfect candour and honesty. In Ireland parties are divided very much into two camps. There are those who are in favour of being connected with England, and those who are in favour of severing the Union. Those two questions are of such immense importance that they swallow up all minor considerations. The Loyalists took upon the hon. Member for the City of Cork as an open and a declared foe. They look upon the policy of hon. Members below the Gangway as being just as much a foreign policy as if they were Russians or political Cossacks; and that is also the point of view in which the Nationalists look upon us. Now, I think it is a good thing to be perfectly fair and outspoken, as I have always tried to be. The hon. Member for the City of Cork, embodying the views of hon. Members below the Gangway, has laid down in the immediate past, very clearly and distinctly, his views upon the Irish Question, in a speech which has already been quoted to the House, no later than last November at Castlebar. I hope the House will not think that I am trespassing unduly upon its time in making these quotations, because it is a matter of absolutely vital importance that we should be clear in our own minds as to what it is that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway want, and also what it is that we want. It will not do for the House of Commons to take its views of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, when they are filtered through the Prime Minister; but it must have them at first hand, from themselves. The hon. Member for the City of Cork is very clear and very explicit on that point. The speech which I am about to quote was delivered by the hon. Member at Castlebar on the 4th of November, 1885; and in order that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway may not interrupt me by asking me where I get the quotation from, I beg to inform them at once that I have taken it from that most excellent journal *The Freeman's Journal.* Therefore, about the accuracy of the quotation there can be no question. This is what the hon. Member said—

> "The great and important questions—I may say the great and important question, for the question of Ireland now is not in the plural but in the singular—there is now only one question, and that question is the legislative independence of Ireland. Speaking for myself, and I believe for the rest of the Irish people and for all my Colleagues, I have to declare that we will never accept, either expressly or implied, anything but the full and complete right to arrange our own affairs, to make our land a nation, and to secure for her, free from outside control, the right to direct her own course among the peoples of the world."

Now, Sir, I do not think language could be plainer than that. The hon. Member for the City of Cork, speaking for himself and all his Colleagues, distinctly stated that nothing would satisfy him or would satisfy them except complete independence and complete separation—["No, no!"]—with Ireland, a nation free from all outside control. I do not know how hon. Members below the Gangway explain those words; but if they really mean what they say, I maintain that they can only mean complete separation—["No!"]—and "Ireland a distinct and independent nation." Well, Sir, this is Home Rule; this is the policy of hon. Members below the Gangway; we thoroughly understand it, and the hon. Member for the City of Cork further informed us some time ago that he had taken off his coat, that he stood upon a single plank, and that that plank was "Ireland a nation." Well, now, we have every hope that, without very much difficulty in the House of Commons, which is not composed either of madmen or traitors, we shall be able to upset the hon. Member for the City of Cork off his plank. But, Sir, a very portentious event has taken place. In the remarks I am about to make, I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister will not imagine for one moment that I have the slightest intention of being disrepectful to him or to his great and high position. In former years I sat behind the right hon. Gentleman. Now I sit in front of him, and I have the advantage of knowing both sides of his policy. A short time ago we observed to our astonishment, and I may add to our horror, that another figure was getting up on the plank. We had, first of all, a telegraphic communication which informed us that the Prime Minister himself had become a convert to the principles of the hon. Member for the City of Cork. This took us by surprise; it astonished and dismayed the country. At first we had some difficulty in recognizing the right hon. Gentleman, for at once a denial appeared in the papers, which stated that the telegraphic communication was not at all accurate. That might mean anything. It might mean that the right hon. Gentleman was not a convert to Home Rule, or that he was a convert and that the details were imperfect. But we had not long to wait. In the debate on the Address, in that wonderful and eloquent speech which the right hon. Gentleman delivered, we had a clear intimation that the process of conversion was rapidly proceeding; and now the Prime Minister stands boldly upon the same plank with the hon. Member for the City of Cork, and proclaims himself openly before the country a convert to Home Rule. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to offer my congratulations most heartily upon the wonderful eloquence and the grasp of intellect displayed by him in his maiden speech in the capacity of Leader of the Home Rule Party. Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman has brought in a Bill for the separation of Ireland from England. ["No!"] I am perfectly well aware that it is not called by that name. The real name that ought to be given to the measure is a Bill, not for the good government of Ireland, but for the good government of the House of Commons. It is a Bill that is intended not to benefit my native land, but to get rid of the Irish Members out of this Assembly. I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman or anyone else in this House will deny that the measure is one of tremendous importance and significance, and that a measure so large in its scope requires that there should be a great cause to demand its introduction. That, I think, will not be denied; and, therefore, when the right hon. Gentleman introduced the Bill, we Irishmen who are to be the victims of the measure expected that he would very clearly and distinctly state why it has been brought in, and that he would justify his introduction before the House of Commons and the country. But the right hon. Gentleman, I think, never in the whole course of his 50 years' experience, had a more difficult task to perform, because the measure was brought in for one purpose, and one purpose only. It was brought in to satisfy the requirements of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, and I will illustrate what I mean in this way. Can the House of Commons imagine for a moment that the 85 Irish Members who sit below the Gangway should, on some future occasion, find themselves at sea in a ship, and that, owing to some misfortune, the vessel were scuttled? Can anyone in the House of Commons imagine for a moment that, under these unfortunate, or fortunate, circumstances, which I should deeply regret, the right hon. Gentleman would go on with this Bill? Why, Sir, the very object of the Bill would have vanished. It is brought in to satisfy hon. Members below the Gangway; and the first thing the right hon. Gentleman had to do was to deal with the man into whose hands the reins of government must fall if the Bill is carried. No one knows better than the right hon. Gentleman opposite that there can be no question at all about who is to be Prime Minister under it, and who is to form the Government of Ireland. It will be formed by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway—a most distinguished Administration. First of all comes the hon. Member for the City of Cork, for whose ability I have the very highest respect. But the Prime Minister had a very difficult task to perform. The hon. Member for the City of Cork is to be his Irish Prime Minister; and the very first thing the right hon. Gentleman had to do was to whitewash the character of his Prime Minister, which character he himself had taken away.

The only way in which we Irishmen can form a judgment as to the probable action of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his future Administration is by looking back at their past performances, and trying to form an estimate from them of what their action is likely to be in the future. Let us look back for a few years—and only a very few years—for this is not very ancient history. It is history which only goes back to the year 1881—about five years ago. The opinions then held by the right hon. Gentleman would not have led any Irishman to conceive that the day was soon coming when he would suggest that the hon. Member for the City of Cork should be Prime Minister of Ireland. At that time the hon. Member for the City of Cork was the Leader of a very small Party, and that made all the difference. [Mr. Gladstone: Hear, hear!] I am glad the right hon. Gentleman acknowledges the accuracy of my statement. At that time the hon. Member for the City of Cork led a very small Party; and, leading that very small Party, the right hon. Gentleman, speaking of the hon. Member, made the following observations:—

> "A handful of men"—

he could not say that now—

> "in Parliament follow Mr. Parnell. I will not call them a Party, for they are not entitled to be called a Party; but they are Gentlemen who join and make themselves effectively responsible for the new gospel of Irish patriotism."

The right hon. Gentleman then went on to describe what the new gospel of Irish patriotism is; and to this I must ask the attention of the House, because the words are not mine. I am afraid that if I were to use this language I should be called to Order. They are, however, the words of the right hon. Gentleman himself about his future Prime Minister. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Now that the Land Act has passed, and now that he is afraid lest the people of England, by their long-continued efforts, should win the hearts of the whole Irish nation, Mr. Parnell has a new and enlarged gospel of plunder to proclaim."

Having held this view at that time, and probably holding it still—[*A laugh*]—well, if he does not hold that view—if his view is entirely changed—he ought to have seized the very first opportunity of saying so in this House; and when he got up the other day at that Table and made that wonderfully eloquent speech of three and a-half hours, he might surely have spared a moment to whitewash the hon. Member. He ought to have reassured those over whom the hon. Member for the City of Cork is to rule that the hon. Member is no longer, in his eyes at any rate, a man who has a "new gospel of plunder to proclaim." I think that was the least he could have done; and if the right hon. Gentleman has not changed his view, he had no right to bring in this Bill. It proposes to destroy the Union which binds the two countries together. It proposes to revert to a state of things that existed before 1800. It would have been very useful to show the House of Commons that Ireland before the Union was in a more prosperous, a more happy, and in a more peaceful condition than she has been since. I think that would have been acting according to the dictates of, at any rate, Irish common sense. But somehow or other, in that speech of three and a-half hours, in which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to revert to a state of things which existed before the Union, he never said a single word that led us to believe that if we revert to that state of things it would be good for Ireland and good for England. I can inform the House why the right hon. Gentleman did not do that. It was because he knew that before the Union the condition of Ireland was absolutely deplorable—[Mr. Gladstone: No, no!]—in comparison with what it has been since. The right hon. Gentleman is very fond of figures, and he has been furnished with the information in response to the communication he has invited from all parts of Ireland. Figures given on the best authority, and which cannot be disputed, show that from 1782 to 1800 the commercial condition of Ireland steadily "disimproved." The wealth of Ireland in 1782 was greater than it was in 1798 or 1799. ["Oh!"] Hon. Members below the Gangway may say "Oh!" but I challenge contradiction. It is very easy to say "Oh!" but I have the figures here, and hon. Members can see for themselves whether what I state is not absolutely correct—namely, that the commercial condition of Ireland from 1782 to 1800 was steadily on the decline, and that since 1800 the wealth of Ireland has increased sevenfold. ["Hear, hear!"] I am glad that hon. Gentlemen agree with that. Knowing that perfectly well, the right hon. Gentleman never alluded to it in his speech, but asked the House to go back to the condition of affairs which existed before the Union, simply on sentimental grounds, and on no other. He did not refer to the commercial or social condition of the country, because he knew as well I do that Grattan's Parliament led up to the rebellion of 1798. [Mr. GLADSTONE: Mr. Pitt led up to it.] The right hon. Gentleman says that Mr. Pitt led up to it. I am not surprised in the least at that observation, because it is the observation I expected to hear. It is always Englishmen who have done these things; it is always something done by those who uphold law and order. Well, Sir, I will not pursue this topic further. The right hon. Gentleman steadily avoided mentioning it, and I only wished to point out to the House that no argument exists from a commercial, social, or industrial point of view which should lead the House of Commons to consent to revert to the condition of things that existed before the Union. [Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) made an observation which was inaudible.] The hon. Member will have an opportunity by-and-bye of contradicting what I have said. There is another argument which might have been used by the right hon. Gentleman with great effect. Perhaps I may be allowed to say a word or two about the commencement of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. The first hour almost of that eloquent speech was taken up in gathering analogies from various countries of Europe in order to show that the experiment he proposes to try in Ireland has succeeded elsewhere. Now, I venture to say that the analogies which the right hon. Gentleman discovered in his historical researches have no more connection with the question we are debating than the connection between China and Japan. If the right hon. Gentleman could have shown that the Irish proper—I mean those who live in Ireland, for the definition of an Irishman by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway is a vague one. As far as I can make out, what hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway mean by an Irishman is a man who speaks with a brogue and is disloyal to the Crown—if the right hon. Gentleman had told the House that the vast majority of Irishmen, taken in the wider sense in which I mean the term, are in favour of his measure, and have determined upon independence and separation, it would have been a strong argument, I admit. But is that so? Now, the hon. Member for the City of Cork, in a speech which he made some time ago, and also the hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton), have said that the Home Rulers are the Representatives of five-sixths of the Irish population. Now, Sir, in one sense he is correct; I admit that. No doubt it is true, if hon. Members below the Gangway are assumed to represent the whole of the respective constituencies for which they sit. They may be correct; but I absolutely deny, and I believe I can prove what I say to be true, that they are followed by five-sixths of the Irish people. When the hon. Member for the City of Cork and the hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton) made that statement, I took the trouble to get out a few figures with regard to the last Election, which, after all, is some indication as to the number in favour of Home Rule, and of those in favour of retaining the connection with England. Now, I do not pretend to say that these figures are absolutely correct, and I will show hon. Members below the Gangway the extent of the error contained in them. If you take the counties that were contested—[Colonel NOLAN: And those which were uncontested.]—I will take them afterwards. Taking the contested elections in the counties, we have a very strong indication of the views of the voters. Now, Ulster had, in the contested constituencies, 112,449 Loyalists voters, of whom there where 70,605 Parnellites, as they are put down here—and that name will do as well as any other—and 37,000 and odd absentees. These are the figures that appear on the Register. As to the uncontested counties, no doubt there is a difficulty; but the only way is to strike an average. I admit that the figures are not perfectly correct; but the accuracy may be either one way or the other. It is just as likely to be in my favour as in favour of the hon. Member for the City of Cork. According to the average, there would be 135,900 Loyalist votes, 85,000 Parnellites, and 35,000 absentees. Treating the whole of Ireland in the same way, the contested counties outside Ulster show 29,861 Loyalists, 226,000 Parnellites, and 108,000 absentees. Striking an average—[*Laughter*]—it may suit hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway to laugh, but the figures are tolerably correct—there will be found 9,073 Loyalists, 68,000 Parnellites, and 32,000 absentees. The representation of the Irish constituencies will thus be found to be 23·6 per cent of Loyalists, 51·3 Parnellites, and 25·1 absentees. Thus, at the very outside, the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his Friends do not represent more than three to one of the Irish population. With regard to the views and the character of that minority of one-third, they represent the wealth, the industry, the education, the backbone, and, as hon. Members may find out, the fighting power of the country. If what I say is correct, I should like to ask why, if the merchants, the bankers, the traders, and the landowners have confidence in the hon. Member for City of Cork and his followers, they are not to be found in the Home Rule ranks? When I look below the Gangway, I ask where are the merchants, the bankers, the traders, and the landowners? Where are they to be found in the ranks of those who represent what is called the Irish nation? Certainly not below the Gangway. Then I think I am correct in saying that the minority of one-third represent, at any rate, the most powerful and most potent part of the Irish people. What, then, is the true reason why this Bill has been brought forward? It has been brought in to get rid of the Irish Members. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland made a speech not very long ago at Chelmsford, and in that speech he distinctly stated why he is in favour of a measure of this kind. If the House will allow me, I should like to read an extract from that speech. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "The real mischief was not in the speeches and Resolutions of the Irish Members; but it was that they were able to weaken the policy of the Government, to turn out Ministers, and to reject their Bills from motives which were not those of national patriotism in an English sense. Do what they would with the Rules of Procedure, they would never restore the virtue of the whole British Parliament, and they would not give to the British people the power of being master in their own House, until they devised some scheme or other which would remove the Irish Members from the British House of Commons."

On Friday night, the right hon. Gentleman made another reference to the Irish Members, and I invite those hon. Members to listen to this reference, and see if they like it—

> "I believe," said the right hon. Gentleman, "that the Irish Assembly might not have the fine manners which distinguished this Assembly. It might be a little ruder in its ways; but I think that it would be as capable of performing the duties of a Legislature with justice and confidence."

The right hon. Gentleman also said that he wanted to restore the dignity of the House of Commons. Without singing the praises of the Irish Members, I think I may justly say that they will compare very favourably with, say, hon. Members below the Gangway on the other side. Therefore, as far as I can understand the speech—and I confess that I do not understand very much of it—delivered by the Prime Minister, he has not given any reason whatever, from the beginning to the end of that speech of three and a-half hours, which should induce this House to pass the Bill as a Bill which will be for the benefit and for the pacification of Ireland. But, as I have said, his object is simply to purify the disturbed atmosphere of the House of Commons. The next important thing for Ulster Members to observe is the way in which the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman was accepted by the hon. Member for the City of Cork, for, after all, it had been framed probably with a view of securing his acceptance. The hon. Member for the City of Cork gave a qualified acceptance to the Bill. He said he received it, but with certain reservations, and those reservations might be removed in Committee. The hon. Member for the City of Cork, however, made one or two remarks to which I must take exception. He said in the course of his speech—and I wish to call the particular attention of the House to this remark, because it gives some inkling of the hostility we have to the Bill ourselves—in speaking of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), the hon. Member said—

> "I never accused the right hon. Gentleman or Earl Spencer of having believed the same thing; of having sanctioned the execution, knowing that the men were innocent."

[MR. PARNELL: Hear, hear!] The hon. Member says "Hear, hear!" When the hon. Member made use of these words, I thought to myself that this was not the way in which the hon. Member spoke in Ireland. If you want to see Norval at its best you must go to the Grampian Hills. If you want to see a modern Irish patriot at his best you must see him when he stumps on his native bog. The quotation I have already given is an instance of how the hon. Member for the City of Cork speaks in the House of Commons; but I now wish to read to the House a sample of the language which the hon. Member uses when he speaks in his native land. The occasion of the speech was at Castlebar. A gentleman had been chosen to represent the constituency—I think it was South Mayo—who had one objection to his candidature—that he was in a position of temporary retirement in penal servitude. The name of this gentleman was Mr. P. Nally. I confess that I fell into a great mistake about Mr. Nally. I was at first misled by the name, because there was a Mr. Peter Nally, who was one of the traversers in the trial of "The Queen *v.* Parnell;" and the House will see that there is some similarity between Peter Nally, the traverser, and Nally, the gentleman in penal servitude. This is what the hon. Member for the City of Cork said about Mr. Nally—

> "I believe of Patrick Nally, that he is the victim of a conspiracy which was formed between Earl Spencer—[*Groans*] —and the informers of their country for the purpose of obtaining victims to what they called law and justice by any and every means, whether they are innocent or not."

How does the hon. Member for the City of Cork reconcile his denial in this House, and this distinct statement—which I have taken also from *The Freeman's Journal*, so that there can be no mistake—how does he reconcile the language which he addressed to his admirers in the West of Ireland, and tried to hold up to scorn and contempt as the vilest form of murderer a man whom every Member in this House should honour and respect?

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I am sure the hon. and gallant Gentleman will allow me to point out that the passage which he has selected from my speech at Castlebar does not involve any contradiction with the statement which I made in the House the other evening. The statement which I then made, and which the hon. and gallant Member has read out to-night, was with reference to the execution of persons in Ireland, and in that statement I absolved Earl Spencer and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) from having acted as it was alleged by some other people in Ireland that they had acted in reference to these executions. The hon. and gallant Gentleman has now referred to the case of the conviction of a person for conspiracy in Ireland. The conviction of Mr. P. Nally for conspiracy is a very different matter; but, at the same time, I feel it is right that I should take this opportunity of unreservedly withdrawing the imputation which I made against Earl Spencer, which was done under very peculiar circumstances and in the heat of the moment. I desire to withdraw it, Sir, in the most unqualified way; but, at the same time, pointing out to the hon. and gallant Gentleman that he cannot rely upon it to prove any inconsistency with my statement the other night.

MAJOR SAUNDERSON: I am glad that the hon. Member is sorry. I am glad that the hon. Member has stated in the House of Commons that he is sorry for uttering these atrocious words; but I expect that the hon. Member will go back to Castlebar and make the same retraction there. The hon. Member went on to speak of the meetings in America, and he said—

> "It is a remarkable fact that the great meetings now being held in favour of the Irish movement in every city in America are mainly called together and organized by the native-born Americans, or by the editors and conductors of the purely American newspapers, and we regard the fact that during the last five or six months we have succeeded in entirely gaining the sympathy of the two great American political Parties—the Democratic and the Republican—as an omen of great hope for the future of our cause."

Permit me to say that I very much doubt whether the language used at recent meetings in America is likely to gain either of these two Parties to the cause of Ireland. That such meetings are held there is no doubt, and hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway who derive their principal supplies from America have every reason for being well acquainted with the fact. Perhaps the House will allow me to read a speech delivered in the town of Chicago, at one of these great meetings, on the 28th of November. It is reported in a paper called *The Chicago Citizen*, a paper which

I never heard of before. But it has been given currency to in this country in a very well known journal which hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, I am sure, look upon with great respect—namely, *United Ireland.* In large type, the report is headed—"Great meeting. Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien." And this is the remark made by one of the speakers at that meeting.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): He is a Protestant clergyman.

Major SANDERSON: I do not in the least degree care what religion he belongs to. We all know that there are bad Protestants; but this is what this man said—and it is reproduced in large type in *United Ireland*—

> "It entirely depended upon the English leaders of public opinion in their dealings with Mr. Parnell's just demands whether or not hell broke out in London."

Now, Sir, I know something about Americans, and I very much doubt whether that sort of language is at all likely to attract the admiration or the sympathy of the great American people. Before I conclude, I must notice one other speech. It is the speech of the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy), who has received, absolutely without qualification the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. [Mr. T. M. Healy: No.] The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) received it with qualifications; but the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) said it was an effort at last to shake hands across the gulf of centuries; and he left the impression on the House, at any rate, that he was a man desirous of peace, and that he was very far from wishing again to enter into polemical discussion. Why does not the hon. and learned Member speak like that in Ireland?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Because this Bill had not been introduced.

Major SAUNDERSON: It is absolutely necessary, Sir, that the House of Commons should know the sort of fuel which is served out to the Irish people to fan the flames of internal hatred and discord between them. This is what the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry said in Ireland not two years ago—

> "I say that even if this were true"—speaking of his own country—"beyond the sea, beyond St. George's Channel, there is a people and a government worth hating. We have not merely our own country to serve, our own people to help, but we have another country to give to confusion. We have her to oppress and to bring to humiliation."

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Where did I say that?

Major SAUNDERSON: I will tell the hon. and learned Member exactly where the speech was delivered. Those words were made use of by the hon. and learned Gentleman at a meeting in Dublin.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Where did the hon. and gallant Member take the words from?

Major SAUNDERSON: I took them from *The Irish Times.*

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I never made use of any such words.

Major SAUNDERSON: Let me point out to the House how useful it is to have in Ireland newspapers of various shades. The words were carefully eliminated from *The Freeman's Journal* and *United Ireland* because they were felt to be too stiff; but they appeared in *The Irish Times*, and they have never been contradicted until the present moment. The hon. and learned Member good humouredly asks me whether I have ever put my hand as a Militiaman into the pocket of England, and he added that he himself has never done so. Well, I have done so. I think the labourer is worthy of his hire; and if the hon. and learned Member imagines that I am ashamed of belonging to my regiment he is greatly mistaken. I have several reasons for being proud of belonging to it. One of them is that it took a distinguished part in 1798 in squashing the Rebellion; and what it did then it is quite willing and ready to do again. Now, Sir, I have already trespassed at great length upon the attention of the House; but before sitting down I wish to say that I can well conceive some reason why it would be a good thing, if certain facts could be proved, to concede Home Rule. If it could be shown, in the first place, as was the case in Hungary, that the whole of the people of Ireland are united in demanding it, then that would be a great argument to use in favour of conceding the demand of the Irish people. But what I say is that there is no analogy whatever between the case of Hungary and that of Ireland. In an eloquent nion of the violent faction, with its hatred to England, which is sometimes known as the dynamite faction. In this country the opinion of that faction will never have weight, and no Government would meanly or basely listen to it; but there is the opinion of the thoughtful American and of the thoughtful Irishman in America. How would the latter opinion be increased against us in volume if we were to refuse to accept the scheme which is offered by this Bill —or some scheme of the kind? I say that it would be a grievous mistake in statesmanship to ignore that opinion. I believe that the English-speaking people of the world are too closely knit together, have too much sympathy with each other, and act and re-act upon each other too nearly to admit of any man who calls himself a statesman ignoring altogether the opinions of such large bodies of people. Almost the whole of the two first nights of the debate, with the exception of the able speech of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), was occupied in denunciations of this scheme from opposite Benches; and, having been challenged, I must say that I do not think those who have opposed the scheme of the Prime Minister have taken any great pains to arrive at any common ground of action in connection with this subject. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), who has had official experience of Ireland, and for whose opinions on many subjects I have a great respect—the right hon. Member will himself, I think, admit that public opinion upon this question has already gone far beyond his scheme. I think he will admit, before this debate is over, that that scheme is no longer applicable. Then I come to the scheme put forward by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain). Well, that scheme is one which I can hardly imagine either my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs or the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) would agree to support—a scheme which presupposes the existence of a Parliament in Ireland, and which, it appears to me, goes far beyond that which is now proposed, and which would make large alterations both in the Parliamentary Government of England and Scotland—alterations which, as far as I know, there is at the present moment no demand for. Then there remains the scheme, not of legislation, but of action, put forward by the noble Marquess himself. I agree with the noble Marquess in believing that a great deal of the evil which has befallen us in connection with Ireland is due to the fact that the two Parties have for generations been playing with this great question. Does there seem to be any chance that the game will cease? It is true that for the moment the tables have been turned, and that, instead of the two great Parties playing with the Irish vote, you have the Irish Members playing with the English Parties. The noble Marquess talked of a combination between the two sides of the House, a combination which would be strong enough to do something on the old lines of Liberal remedial legislation, coupled with the suspension of many of the Constitutional liberties of Ireland. I do not feel at all sure that such a combination could easily be formed which would go so far as to be willing to introduce a Coercion Bill for Ireland, and at the same time to offer some small modicum of Irish local self-government; but if it could, would its operation be extended to other questions besides that of Ireland, and how long would it last? I am convinced that there is no prospect of any such combination between the two sides of the House as would render possible the formation on that basis of a stable Government, or a Government that would cope successfully with the large arrears of legislation required for England and for Scotland as well as for Ireland. Although I know full well that hon. Gentlemen opposite dislike Home Rule, yet they dislike the ways of hon. Members below the Gangway on this side of the House a good deal more. And if this combination would not hold good when you come to deal with large questions of legislation, what would the result be upon your Parliamentary action? For 86 years you have attempted to weld the people of Ireland with the people of Great Britain in one Parliament, and you are further from achieving your object now than you were at starting. What would be the result of attempting to act upon the combination of the noble Marquess with 86 Nationalist Irish Members still sitting in the House? I do not wish to refer solely to the obstruction which those Members would offer. That word was common enough in our mouths in the last Parliament, and its consequences were great enough. Who does not remember at what cost to the efficiency of the House, at what cost to its reputation, I might almost say at what risk to its very existence, that obstruction was carried on in the last Parliament? That was bad enough. Those who remember that time cannot have forgotten the discontent that was spreading through England because nothing was taken in hand for the benefit of England or Scotland—discontent that was rapidly becoming dangerous, and that might again become overwhelming. I do not refer to the power of obstruction alone. And here let me pause for a moment to say a word to those hon. Members who have not been long in this House. Do not dream that by any alteration of your Rules of Procedure you can deal satisfactorily with a body of men in your midst who are determined, if they can, to break down your system in the interests of their country. I know some hon. Members think that by adopting some plan of *clôture*, and some more rapid means of bringing discussion here to an end, and by the adoption of some other Rules of Procedure, they will be able to expedite Business. We could expedite Business among men willing that the Business should go on; but to think for a moment that you could make the *clôture* a weapon of daily and hourly use in this House is a wild dream. If you could do so, you would destroy your Parliament. Now, I admit that the *clôture* is wanted occasionally and for specific purposes; but it is a weapon rarely to be used, and it is an idle dream to suppose that it would be effectual against a large body of Members always acting together, and always acting with one idea which dominates every other consideration, and to which they make every other consideration subservient. Therefore, the constant employment of such a weapon as the *clôture* is the wildest dream of anybody who knows anything about the Business of Parliament. But there is something which I fear even more than obstruction — namely, the assistance which Irish Members would lend to our legislation. We had a taste of that in the last Parliament. You may possibly frame very strict Rules to govern the Procedure of the House; but you could not frame Rules to say how Members should vote, and the result might be that if the combination took place which the noble Marquess wishes so much to introduce, on the first occasion that that natural difference arose which must always exist between the Conservative and the Progressive side of this House—on the very first occasion of that difference arising you might have a compact body of votes thrown on one side or the other, without regard to the subject under consideration, but merely with a view to the interests of the Irish Party at the moment. There would be an independent body of Members exercising immense influence, not steady, but wayward, and the result would often be that the opinion announced at the polls in England and Scotland would find itself reversed in Parliament. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill)—who, by the way, in his speech to-night, I thought, kept a remarkably open mind in that brilliant, amusing, and clever speech—entered upon a criticism of the details of the measure; but I noticed that the noble Lord never attempted to do that which he can do very well when he likes, and that is, to use a common expression, that he did not put his foot down on this occasion with regard to the principle of the measure.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): The hon. Gentleman does me an injustice when he says that I did not put my foot down upon the Bill.

Mr. WHITBREAD: I did not say that he had refrained from putting his foot down upon the Bill. But I will put it in another form. I am sure I do not want to misrepresent the noble Lord. The noble Lord criticized the scheme now before the House for what was in it and what was not in it with very great freedom; but nothing fell from him, as far as I remember, that would justify me this time next year, supposing the noble Lord propounded a liberal scheme of federation or anything else, referring to his speech to-night as being inconsistent with his doing so. The point I wish to come to is this. The noble Lord followed the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and the right hon. Member for

West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) in drawing a very doleful picture of the inferior position the Irish Parliament would occupy under this scheme. The noble Marquess said—

> "Can you expect that this Parliament will be satisfied with the powers it is proposed to give it? Can you fancy a Parliament shorn of all power to take part in Imperial affairs being satisfied with the position it would occupy?"

First of all, I would like to say that, after listening with extreme attention to the speech of the Prime Minister, I did not think that the exclusion of the Irish Members was an unalterable or a vital principle of the Bill, and that there might not be some representation of Ireland in some due and moderate degree. [Mr. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!] It would, of course, be absurd to suppose that if the Irish Members had a Parliament of their own at Dublin, they would still come to this Parliament in the same numbers as at present. But suppose that the Irish Members are content to be excluded, is it not possible that they may themselves say something of this sort—"We are going to undertake, if Parliament will allow us, the tremendous task of trying to govern our own country, and for years we shall have quite enough on our hands." I can fancy their saying this—"We cannot afford to fritter away our strength by attempting to carry on the government of Ireland and at the same time taking our part in the Business of the Parliament at Westminster." Now, look at the task which these men would have before them, or any set of men who were honestly prepared to set about the good government of Ireland. Would it not be enough to satisfy even the loftiest aspirations? First of all, they have got to restore order in a distracted country; they have got to establish the credit of the country; they have got to invite back capital to their country now so sadly driven away; they have got to settle the agrarian difficulty; and they have got to do something to smooth over religious animosities, which some hon. Members of this House do not think it beneath them still to try to stir up. They have got also to reconcile with the religion of the majority of the people the sound education of the children; and they would have, too, to take care, as we in England and Scotland have taken care, that no power shall be able to prevent the acquisition by the children of their country of sound and useful knowledge. They would have to take care that free sale should really exist between all classes of the community, and that upon free sale should follow quiet possession. They would have to take care—and this is a task that would tax them to the utmost—they would have to take care, if they can, to eradicate from the minds of the people that deep-rooted and fatal belief that it is justifiable to have a Secret Code existing alongside with the Constitutional Law. Surely it cannot be said that these are small or light tasks, when everyone knows that they have baffled the efforts of all English statesmen, although they have strained their nerves to the utmost. We have seen Parliaments, which came to the consideration of Irish grievances with the sympathy which men feel for a country to which they owe much, robbed of the fruit of their work. Well, I grant, that if, under the blessing of Providence, any measure of success were to attend the efforts of men so labouring, if they got their work well in hand—if they developed to some extent the wealth which the earth and the sea which washes their shores, would render—if they got their work well in hand, and then came to see something like a successful result of their efforts, that they might stand up, and, looking around them, say—"We should now like to take our part in Imperial affairs." The time may come—whether it is provided for in the scheme or not—when it would not be contrary to the wishes of the people of this country, and, I believe, not beyond what statesmanship could desire, to frame some plan which would give them a just and sufficient representation in Imperial matters. There have been direful forebodings in the Press and elsewhere of the anarchy, confusion, and tyranny that would follow from the passing of any measure of Home Rule. I will not dwell much upon that point, because it has been so ably dealt with by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General; but I will ask the House to consider where is this experiment of Home Rule to be tried? It will be tried almost in sight of the English shores, and almost within hail of Scotland. If you embark upon the experiment, Ireland could not slip her moorings and be wafted to some remote corner of the globe out of the reach of and beyond the ken of civilization. The experiment would still be tried under the watchful and jealous eyes of England and Scotland; and if such a state of things as some of you have pictured were to arise, if they failed in their effort and liberty should be gone, if tyranny should still be rampant and property should not be made secure, what would be the conditions and criticisms under which Ireland would be placed? You know quite well that, if this state of things should arise, England and Scotland would say—

> "We tried you in our own Parliament, and the experiment failed. We tried you with a large measure of self-government, and it failed also. You have shown yourselves unfit to be governed by our Parliament under our Constitutional system, and you have shown yourselves unfit to govern yourselves."

That verdict, and the necessary consequences, would, Sir, be backed up by the opinion of the civilized world. But, Sir, I have better hopes of Ireland. I do not know whether this scheme is destined to become law, or whether it will be some other scheme—called, perhaps, by some other name—perhaps even more far-reaching; but of this, I am certain, no Government can be formed that would not, in a very short time, be compelled to take this question up. The considerations which lead me to support this scheme now are that, looking back to the efforts which I myself have witnessed in this House, in which I have taken a humble and, for the most part, a silent share; the strenuous efforts which have been made for the amelioration of the condition of Ireland; the laws passed which were, undoubtedly, good laws; the boons given to Ireland that have not been given to England or Scotland—looking back upon all these things, I see the feelings of Ireland towards this country little changed for the better—I ask myself the question whether it is not a fact that we must recognize that law in Ireland is not respected because it has never been accepted? I am somewhat comforted in taking a step which many of my Friends are unable to take with me by the recollection that I took part in extending the suffrage to Ireland, and in securing that the votes should be given independently without fear and without influence. Ought I now, that the verdict of that country has been given, to desert the principles upon which I have acted? The noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) thinks it is of vital consequence to keep that clause in the Act of Union which says that the two people should for ever come together in one Parliament; he thinks it a little thing to disregard completely and entirely the representations which have been made by those who have been elected in Ireland. I cannot follow the noble Lord in that view. When the minds of men are much tried and much separated, I prefer to hold to that which, at all events, has something of principle in it. After having put the question to the Irish people, and having found that they have answered in one direction by an overwhelming majority, I prefer to listen to that voice, and to do what I can to satisfy it.

Mr. GIBSON (Liverpool, Walton): I will attempt, as far as possible, representing, as I do, an English constituency, to follow the example of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, who have treated the question entirely apart from Party considerations. All my life I have been in the habit of taking a moderate and hopeful view of Ireland, and in anything I may say here this evening I should bitterly regret saying anything that would unfairly prejudice or affect any decision the House can come to. Having made the admission that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite have dealt with the question upon high and dignified patriotic considerations, it is necessary for me to point out that in much which has fallen from the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) it is impossible for me to see in what principle the hon. Member invites the House to follow him. The view of the hon. Gentleman appears to be this:—"The intelligent American thinks so and so; the Irish Party have exhibited an extraordinary power of disarranging the practical calculations of the two Parties in this country; they have nearly wrecked the House of Commons, and, therefore, it is necessary for the House of Commons to come to terms with them; if you do not come to terms at once with the Irish Party to give them what they require, the result will be the ruin of the Empire and of the Constitution." Let the House consider for one moment the extraordinary danger of an argument of that kind. Suppose the Ultimatum of the Irish Party was before us this evening, and was boldly stated to be that they would have Grattan's Parliament and Grattan's Parliament only—a Parliament free and unmutilated, perfectly able to deal with other nations, to regulate its own trade, and free to hold its own place among nations—the argument of the hon. Gentleman would equally apply to the necessity of granting that demand. It would also equally apply if the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) were to advance that proposition. The view suggested by the hon. Member is, that because the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian has brought forward a measure—though that measure is one which, upon its merits, the House ought to reject—the House ought to endorse it. Suppose, by way of illustration, that the right hon. Gentleman had said that there was a long-standing and festering sore poisoning and destroying the relations between England and Ireland, and that it was necessary not only to go back and repeal the Act of Union, but to go further back still to the time of Henry II., and to let Ireland go free once more to take her place among nations, the position of this debate would be seriously altered, but the argument of the hon. Member would be just the same—namely, that because the Prime Minister, with his enormous acquisitions, his vast political experience, and the affection the country bears towards him, has fallen into a mistake, we are bound against our better judgment to follow him, no matter what in our consciences we feel. It appears to me that there must be in this vast Constitutional crisis a liberty of private judgment for each of us, which we are bound to exercise at our own peril. We cannot follow any man's lead unless that lead should commend itself to our reason. I do not think that hon. Members on this side of the House are bound, because the Prime Minister has brought forward a certain proposition, to say that there is no alternative to it, or to refuse to canvas it, but rather that we should decide for ourselves what is the real question before the House—whether the Bill is one which would do injury to this country and to Ireland, and would be no settlement of the Irish Question at all. Now, Sir, it appears to me that this Bill, as stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, with all that wealth and accuracy of language which he has at his command, purports to give legal autonomy to Ireland, and, in fact, to give a repeal of the Union, but to give it muffled up and concealed, with the result that a few years after obtaining it there would be a struggle for complete separation, with endless heartburnings, bitterness, and strife, and perhaps operations of a very serious character. I shall not long trespass on the indulgence of the House; but I should like to ask what would be the circumstances which would justify the bringing in of such a measure? In the first place, I think it is not unreasonable to say that the matter, in some of its material details, at all events, ought to have been before the country and considered. I do not say that the country was to give a mandate to each of its Representatives in the House; but I do say that the country is entitled to know from the Prime Minister, who is asking for its confidence, what his plans of Home Rule are before they are sprung upon the House of Commons, and before he receives a command to carry them out. But the Attorney General has said that it is not necessary for a great political Leader like the right hon. Gentleman to lay his views before the country, and reference has been made to the Crimes Act of 1882. Was there ever a more unsubstantial point made? Everyone knows that the Crimes Act was brought in in consequence, not of the crime existing when the Government came into existence, but in consequence of the very serious outbreak of crime which happened in 1882, long after the Prime Minister came into Office. Of course, it is impossible for anyone to say, or for the Attorney General to argue, that the Prime Minister could beforehand be in a position to lay before the country a request for powers to deal with an outbreak before that outbreak occurred, and to ask for a mandate or a command to deal with it. Let us see what are the circumstances under which the scheme is brought forward. The Prime Minister admits that for the last 50 years—since 1829—the laws passed by England for Ireland have been good laws. The laws with regard to land were far more favourable to the tenant in Ireland than in any other part of the Kingdom. I venture to think that the Highland crofter would be ready to jump out of his skin if he could secure a measure like the Irish Land Act. Under these circumstances, how is this demand justified by the Prime Minister? The laws governing Ireland are more just and favourable than those enjoyed by any other part of the United Kingdom. These laws have been justly admired; and is it to be said in this House that it is competent, by refusing to obey these laws, to force Parliament to agree to separation? I submit that such a line of argument ought not to be tolerated for a moment. If we have good laws, and laws fit to be on the Statute Book, we should insist on having them obeyed. I do not know whether any hon. Gentleman in this House has ever considered that law is not operative in society unless there is some force behind it; and there is no more use in the judgment of a Judge than in the prattling of a parrot if there is no policeman or Sheriff to carry out the decrees of the Judge. What is the use of having just laws in Ireland for the protection of life and property and for the removal of legitimate grievances if we do not insist that the law should be obeyed? I think the language applying the word "foreign" to Ireland was most unfortunate language as coming from the Prime Minister. I should like to know at what period in the history of Ireland the law would cease to be foreign law if this Bill passes and becomes a Statute of the Realm? It was, I think, most unfortunate that the right hon. Gentleman should apply the word "foreign" either to England or Ireland. I have been brought up in the belief that I am no foreigner in England, and I have not been treated as if I were. I sit for an English constituency, as also does the Attorney General, who, also, has no reason to say that in this country he has been regarded as a foreigner. It is certainly a strange thing, when we have been welcomed so warmly and cordially in England, to find that when Englishmen go over to Ireland to enforce rightful and good laws, those laws are to be spoken of in the House of Commons as foreign laws, and that the men who have passed them are to be denounced as enslavers. In 1871 the Prime Minister said that the only condition that would justify a measure of Home Rule was that there should be grievances in Ireland which a British Parliament refused to redress, and, being applied to for redress, was persistently deaf to the application. In Aberdeen, in 1871, the Prime Minister pointed out that the only justification for the demand for a separate Parliament would be a persistent refusal of the redress of grievances by the Imperial Parliament. But in his address to the electors of Mid Lothian the right hon. Gentleman said distinctly that all grievances were removed, and in his speech on Thursday last he did not put forward any grievances that are to be redressed, or state that Parliament is unwilling to redress such grievances. I say, frankly, that if grievances exist in Ireland let them be pointed out, and the Imperial Parliament will redress them. Parliament ought not to be placed in this position—that having passed just laws, and being willing to redress grievances, it should be insisted that the demand of a certain class must be granted, because they say that the law is a foreign law which they dislike, and, whether just or unjust, they will not obey it. Without entering into the historical inquiry of the right hon. Gentleman, I wish to point out the dangerous nature of some of the instances which he referred to. The Prime Minister's argument was that Ireland and England are two nations; but, according to the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), there is only a small stream dividing the two countries, which the Prime Minister will be able to look across every morning, and so follow out the results of his work. Let me, then, point out the dangerous nature of some of the right hon. Gentleman's illustrations. Look at the nature of his illustration in regard to Grattan's Parliament. That Parliament was a sham Parliament, having had no independent existence; and the country at that time was in the hands and pockets of English administrators. But take the case of Grattan's Parliament. If the view of the right hon. Gentleman is correct, that Parliament did not impair the unity of the Empire, why, then, does he not give Grattan's Parliament now? When the speech of the right hon. Gentleman is read by a new generation in the volumes of *Hansard*, it will be asked why he did not propose a return to Grattan's Parliament, seeing that it would not impair the unity of the Empire? If the problem be fairly and impartially considered, it will be found that the granting of the demand now made is a surrender of the entire question now at issue between Ireland and England; and it would be better, in the ultimate interests and for the dignity of this country, and the avoidance of years of pain and anguish and strife, at once to concede complete independence to Ireland, rather than a sham independence, which must, sooner or later, result in freedom accompanied by hate. Let me ask hon. Gentlemen this question — Have they considered that the proposed Irish Parliament might repeal every English Statute that has ever been applied to Ireland, and that it might apply coercion in Ireland? Is it not a strange thing that coercion, which is so odious when applied by Englishmen now, might possibly be applied under very different circumstances by another Parliament in another country? After all, it is a very serious thing for this House to devolve its gigantic responsibilities, its centuries of accumulated obligations, with regard to Ireland upon another Parliament, with an easy conscience and with complete absolution. England has been doing good to Ireland for many years. Wax not weary in your well-doing, nor give the task of well-doing to the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). It appears strange to me that in the state of social disorder now unhappily existing in Ireland it should occur to the Prime Minister that the only way of dealing with it is not to enforce righteous laws, but to make a concession, and give up the entire Statute Book and the administration of the law in that Statute Book to a Party which, according to the right hon. Gentleman himself, is not fit to be trusted with the powers of Grattan's Parliament. It must be recollected that the new Parliament would commence its task of legislation surrounded with circumstances of discredit and suspicion pronounced upon it by the British Legislature. And so dangerous may the new Parliament become that it is necessary to reserve the power of destroying it and of revoking its legislation by recalling the Irish Members back to the Imperial Parliament, and allowing the old state of things to go on once more. Contracts are safe from it. Ulster is at present in a state of uncertainty. The English Revenue, as far as it is collected in Ireland, and some other matters, are safe from the action of the Irish Parliament; but hon. Members ought to recollect that, except the matters reserved, there is absolute power and jurisdiction for it to deal with questions affecting life and property in Ireland; to enact a new Code; to root out trial by jury; to establish martial law; to impose a poll tax; and, in fact, to upset the whole foundations of social law and order in Ireland. The supremacy of Parliament is gone under the Bill. What is the control to be exercised by the British Legislature? What is the control? I do not know whether hon. Members have considered that point; but I have done so. I ask what is the control to be exercised by the British Legislature? Is to be the assent of the Sovereign? If so, is it to be a personal assent, or is it to be exercised on the assent of an Irish Minister, or on that of an English Minister? If it is to be exercised on the assent of an English Minister, is there to be a discussion on each Bill in this House as to whether the English Minister is to give his assent? Is the English Minister to be independent of this House, or under its control, so far as giving this assent is concerned? This is a matter of great difficulty, because in the latter case every Bill would become the subject of discussion in this House, where the Irish Members would not sit. Suppose that in five or 10 years Ireland were to get into a state of disorder and financial embarrassment, and that it were necessary for this Parliament to put an end to the Dublin Parliament, and resume the reins of Government once more, what would be the condition of affairs? I think it will be admitted that if the Irish people have a talent for getting money, they have certainly a considerable power of spending it. I am not aware of any country that cannot raise money on the payment of some percentage; and, therefore, you may have Ireland borrowing large sums of money from other countries, which you could not repudiate. Under Grattan's Parliament the Debt of Ireland was raised from £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 to £20,000,000, which shows that a country can borrow money under any circumstances. Again, suppose the Irish Parliament were to pass a Law of Confiscation, or a law vesting the property of one class in another class; but if you recall from Ireland the statutory power which this Bill would give, you will leave on its Statute Book all the laws passed; you cannot revoke the Acts passed, or the rights settled under those Acts. This, I say, is also a very serious matter. It has been said that it did not so much matter what was the law in a country, provided there were Judges and the Judges were obeyed. But there is no use in having laws if the Executive decline to see the laws carried out. I refer to this because the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister has told the Irish people in this House that they are not fit to be trusted with the appointment of Judges who are to act honestly as between England and Ireland. With regard to the appointment of the Exchequer Judges, you will be regarded as completing what is to be a standing insult to the Irish Bench. The Judges that are to determine cases between Catholics and Protestants, between landlords and tenants, and similar matters, you say may be appointed by the Irish Parliament; but when you come to deal with cases between the English Revenue Department and the Irish debtor you have an English-appointed Judge. With regard to the question of the reservations with respect to the powers of the Irish Parliament, the words relating to these exceptions are loose and vague, and of a general character; and I ask who is to decide upon them? On the subject of bankruptcy, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) said he could not understand trade except as connected with bankruptcy. Now, suppose the Irish Courts insisted that bankruptcy was within the powers of the Irish Parliament, and suppose the English Courts decided the contrary—Who is to determine the question? If you once divest yourselves of the Civil power with regard to Ireland, the only possible action between the two countries in case of difficulty is that very unpleasant one—the action of the military—and I do not think it likely to conduce to the peaceful relations of the two countries to have batches of troops patrolling Ireland discharging the duty of police. Who is to decide these questions?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

MR. GIBSON: Well, Sir, that is the most extraordinary proposal I ever heard of—the differences between the two countries are to be settled by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Are there to be any members appointed by the Irish Parliament? Because it would be a most amusing circumstance that these vast questions between the two Parliaments should be settled by an appeal to the Privy Council, in which the English Judges would outnumber the Irish Judges in the proportion of 10 to one. I think the hon. and learned Member for South Derry (Mr. T. M. Healy) himself, and other members of the Legal Profession, would have every reason to enjoy the conflict that would take place, because I have no doubt there would be many cases coming before the tribunal, and as long as the funds of the Parliament existed these cases would continue to be argued. There are some other considerations to which I wish to call the attention of the House as being absolutely conclusive that the Bill, if passed in its present form, would necessarily amount to the complete giving up of the entire liberty, property, and security of the people of Ireland to this new Parliament, especially when it is remembered that a number of added restrictions must be brushed away, in the course of time, by some kind of force, other than Constitutional action. If you look at the Bill, you will see that the Irish Parliament to be created is stereotyped for ever. I could understand the Prime Minister saying that he would try a small instalment of Home Rule, which was to operate for a year or two—that he would give something in the form of a large Corporation or Board; but so confident is the right hon. Gentleman of the operation of the details of the scheme that he has stereotyped it once and for ever. The moment the Bill is passed, the Irish Parliament is constituted without any power of relieving itself. The only modification provided is that drastic one mentioned by the Prime Minister—that the Imperial Parliament should destroy the Irish Legislature, and recall the Irish Members to the House of Commons. There is another subject to which I wish to refer. Absolutely no security is given in the Bill to the minority, except this illusory protection of the upper Order, which will be elected very much under the same influence as the lower Order, and which will be annihilated as regards voting power by the lower Order. I oppose this Bill on the ground not merely that it does injury to England, but that I believe, in my honest judgment, it will do injury to Ireland if it becomes law. It is because I believe that it will injure Ireland—that it will retard her commercial and economical advancement, and the comfort and tranquillity of her people —that I offer it my strenuous opposition. I assure hon. Members that there is no one who has more at heart than I have the cause of Ireland. I have every reason to wish that my country, to which I am so deeply attached, should have a great and glorious future, in which all sectarian animosity should be lost, and in which human life and property should be as jealously respected as in any other part of the British Dominions. But how can you trust the prognostications and prophecies so freely uttered from the Benches opposite with regard to this Bill? I maintain that it is an unworkable Bill—a bad Bill—and one which, instead of healing the wounds of Ireland, will operate as a seton to keep open the sore which unhappily exists. We cannot have law and order in Ireland unless the people of that country come to regard this Parliament as a just and powerful Body, which is determined to have its law obeyed without vacillation between Party and Party, ready to listen to the just demands of Ireland, and giving respectful attention to everything which falls from the able Representatives which Ireland sends to this House, but declining to be bullied or forced into concessions of which there is no end. If you say that this Empire will be wrecked unless concession is made, I ask what will be your position if you make a concession which, when it is made, my countrymen repudiate; if they repeat with increased efficacy the argument which has been used already on the other side of the House that, having gone three-fourths of the journey, you should go the other fourth; if they say—"We object to your going to war with America or with France;" and, using the expression, of course, by way of illustration—"If you send your troops here we shall 'Boycott' them." Well, Sir, anyone must see the danger of strife and trouble that is sure to arise under the circumstances I have alluded to. This Bill is no settlement of the Irish Question; it is the beginning of evils; and in saying that I speak nothing from a Party point of view. It is the deliberate judgment I have formed, and I implore the House not to follow the right hon. Gentleman on to the quicksands to which he is alluring us. It is easy for us in this House to commit all posterity to this wretched, ignominious settlement of the Irish Question, which I have shown you will be no settlement at all. I would ask every hon. and right hon. Gentleman who hears me to think once, and twice, and thrice, before he does this to secure an advantage which is no advantage at all.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir William Harcourt,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

—o—

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (POOR LAW) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board under the provisions of "The Poor Law Amendment Act, 1867," as extended by "The Poor Law Act, 1879," relating to the Townships of Manchester and Hulme, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 172.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board, relating to the Borough of Aberavon, the Local Government District of Great Harwood, the Improvement Act District of Leek, the Local Government Districts of Bognor (two) and Shepton Mallet, and the District of Weston super Mare, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 173.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board, relating to the City and Borough of Bath, the Borough of Harrowgate, the Local Government District of Hendon, the Boroughs of Plymouth and Ramsgate, the Local Government District of Reddish, and the Borough of Shrewsbury, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 174.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (POOR LAW) (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm certain Orders of the Local Government Board under the provisions of "The Divided Parishes and Poor Law Amendment Act, 1876," as amended and extended by "The Poor Law Act, 1879," relating to the Parishes of Glinton, Greetwell, Mappleton, Maxey, Newborough, Northborough, Okeover, Peakirk, Snelston, Thorpe, and Willingham Cherry; to the Townships of Alkmonton, Biggin, Calwich, Clifton and Compton, Ellaston, Hollington, Hulland, Longford, Mayfield, Newball, Newton Grange, Prestwood, Rand, and Shirley; to the Chapelries of Bullington and Fulnetby; and to the Liberty of Offcote and Underwood, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 175.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (POOR LAW) (NO. 3) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broodhurst, Bill to confirm certain Orders of the Local Government Board under the provisions of "The Divided Parishes and Poor Law Amendment Act, 1876," as amended and extended by "The Poor Law Act, 1879," relating to the Parishes of Ashburnham (two), Brightling, Catsfield, Dallington (two), Hartwell, Ninfield, Stoke Mandeville, and Warbleton, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 176.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (POOR LAW) (NO. 4) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm certain Orders of the Local Government Board under the provisions of "The Divided Parishes and Poor Law Amendment Act, 1876," as amended and extended by "The Poor Law Act, 1879," relating to the Parishes of Blandford-Saint-Mary, Bryanston, Charlton-Adam, Charlton-Mackrell, Compton-Dundon, King-Weston, Llangynog, Llanrhaidr-yn-Mochnant (Montgomery), Llanrhaidr-yn-Mochnant (Denbigh), Pennant, Pimperne, Steepleton, Preston, Tarrant-Keynston, Tarrant-Rushton, Turnworth, Winterborne - Clenston, and Winterborne-Stickland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 177.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (POOR LAW) (NO. 5) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm certain Orders of the Local Government Board under the provisions of "The Divided Parishes and Poor Law Amendment Act, 1876," as amended and extended by "The Poor Law Act, 1879," relating to the Parishes of Beaumont, Crosby-upon-Eden, Saint-Cuthbert's-Without (Carlisle), and Stanwix; and to the Townships of Cassop, East Heddon, Fawdon, Newburn, Newburn-Hall, Quarrington, South-Gosforth, Throckley, and Wallbottle, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 178.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (POOR LAW) (NO. 6) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Broadhurst, Bill to confirm certain Orders of the Local Government Board under the provisions of "The Divided Parishes and Poor Law Amendment Act, 1876," as amended and extended by "The Poor Law Act, 1879," relating to the Parish of Marton-with-Moxby; to the Townships of Ampleforth-Birdforth, Ampleforth-Oswaldkirk, Ampleforth-Saint-Peter, Ayton West, Burniston, Byland (Coxwold), Cloughton, Harwooddale, Husthwaite, Hutton-Bushel, Oswaldkirk, Scalby, Silpho, Thornton-with-Baxly, and Wass; and to the Chapelry of Farlington, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Secretary Childers.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 179.]

COUNTY COURTS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Small, Bill to amend the Law relating to County Courts in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Small, Mr. James E. O'Doherty, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. O'Hea.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 180.]

IMPERIAL REVENUE (IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN).

Return *presented,*—of Gross Imperial Revenue of Ireland, and of Population, for 1851, 1871, and 1881, and of England and Scotland for same years [ordered 23rd February; *Sir Joseph M'Kenna*]; to lie upon the Table.

TAXATION (ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND).

Return *presented,*—of Gross Revenue of England and Wales, Scotland, and of Ireland respectively in 1884-5, of Population, and of average incidence of Taxation [ordered 7th April; *Sir Joseph M'Kenna*]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY MANUFACTURING ESTABLISHMENTS (ANNUAL ACCOUNTS).

Return *presented,*—of Annual Accounts for 1884-5 [Address 7th April; *Mr. Woodall*]; to lie upon the Table.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACTS, 1878 AND 1884.

Copy *presented,*—of Four Orders of the Lords of the Council [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NEW ZEALAND (TAWHIAO).

Return *presented,*—of Despatch from the Governor of New Zealand and Translation of a Letter from the Chief Tawhiao [Address 29th March; *Sir John Gorst*]; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 13*th April,* 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Report* — Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) (69); Marriages (Hours of Solemnization) * (73); Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland) * (36).

Third Reading — Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (No. 2) * (58); Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment * (67), and *passed.*

EASTERN ROUMELIA.—QUESTION.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: Seeing the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his place, I wish to ask him, Whether he has any information to give to the House in respect to the state of the negotiations between the Prince of Bulgaria and the Porte on the one hand, and the Powers on the other; and whether he has any intimation as to the result of the recent negotiations?

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of Rosebery): My Lords, I have to state, in answer to the noble Marquess, that on April 5 there was signed at Constantinople by the Representatives of all the Great Powers a Protocol embodying what is called, though erroneously, the Tsanow proposal. The effect of that is that the Government of Eastern Roumelia should be confided to the Prince of Bulgaria under the terms of Article 17 of the Treaty of Berlin. We have heard today from Sofia that Prince Alexander, while still maintaining his objections to the condition which makes his appointment as Governor General of Eastern Roumelia subject to renewal at the end of five years with the assent of the Powers, has announced to the Grand Vizier of the Turkish Government that, in view of the unanimous decision of the Powers, he is ready to defer to the authority of the International Act signed by their Representatives, and to nominate at once the Bulgarian Members of the different Commissions specified in the arrangement.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: Will Papers be laid on the Table of the House?

The Earl of ROSEBERY: Yes; as soon as possible.

BURGH POLICE AND HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 69.)

(*The Earl of Elgin.*)

REPORT.

Amendments *reported* (according to Order).

The Earl of GALLOWAY proposed the insertion of an Amendment, the object of which, he said, was to provide that where a person was fined by the Court the penalty "pounds Scot" should be altered to "pounds sterling." He was induced to make the proposal, because he was informed, on good authority, that the Corporation of Glasgow, the Convention of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs of Scotland, the General Assembly of the Established and Free Church, the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, as well as other Religious Bodies, were in favour of it. He submitted that the phrase "pounds Scot" was obsolete, and that the feeling of the important Bodies to whom he had just alluded as being anxious for the acceptance of this Amendment held the view that if the ancient Statute in regard to Sunday trading was still in force, in that case the penalty should be made a reality in case of conviction.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said, he did not see how his noble Friend made out that he proposed no increase of penalty, as the conversion of "pounds Scot" into "pounds sterling," would more than quintuple it.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Earl of DALHOUSIE) said, that the point had been considered by the Select Committee which discussed the Bill, and a similar proposal was unanimously rejected. He must, therefore, oppose the Amendment.

Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

Further Amendments made; and Bill to be read 3ª on *Thursday* next.

IRELAND (REPRESSION OF CRIME).

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE, in moving—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for a Return, from 1830 to the present time, of all coercion Bills (by whatever title they may be called) passed by Parliament, and by whom they were proposed: Also, a Return of agrarian crime committed 18 months previous to, and 18 months after, the passing of the said Acts,"

said, that the term "coercion" had become detested in Ireland, though he hardly knew why such should be the case, because coercion merely affected those who joined in unlawful combinations. The Executive Government existed for the purpose of enforcing the law; and if the law could not be enforced in one way, it must be enforced in another, and Coercion Acts enabled the Executive to enforce the law more effectually than could be done without them. These Acts did not affect law-abiding people in Ireland, but only those who engaged in illegal acts. He hoped that these Returns would be granted.

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for a Return, from 1830 to the present time, of all coercion Bills (by whatever title they may be called) passed by Parliament, and by whom they were proposed: Also, a Return of agrarian crime committed 18 months previous to, and 18 months after, the passing of the said Acts."—(*The Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Earl SPENCER) said, he hoped their Lordships would not think he was reluctant to give any information on this important subject with regard to any matters which required elucidation; but he confessed he was under some difficulty in this instance. He thought almost all the information which the noble Lord wished for could be obtained by himself or his secretary from the Papers laid before Parliament. Besides, this Return would throw an enormous amount of work upon the Department. He considered that some distinction should be made between these two classes of information. The term "coercion" might apply to some laws passed for England; it was, therefore, extremely difficult to know where they were to stop in the preparation of so elaborate a Return. With regard to agrarian crime since 1844, the information asked for had been supplied by a Return moved for by Mr. Forster, and this Return was complete down to 1881, and since then Reports had been furnished monthly.

LORD ASHBOURNE said, he was disposed to think, owing to the stress laid on the subject by the Prime Minister a few nights ago, that it would be convenient if they had these figures in an authoritative form, and with something like historical continuity. He must, however, object to the term "coercion;" he would rather describe the legislation as special measures of a repressive character with regard to criminal acts. He suggested that the Motion should be postponed until Thursday; and the noble Lord in the meantime could consider the matter, and ask for the information in a more clear and succinct form.

THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK also suggested that the term "coercion" should not be used, and complained that the noble and learned Lord himself had used the word.

LORD ASHBOURNE: I never used it; on the contrary, I suggested that the word "coercion" was inapplicable and should not be used.

THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK said, he was glad he was mistaken. They could not describe Acts to protect life and property as Coercion Acts. It was a misnomer. They all knew the result of giving a dog a bad name.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY) said, these Acts ought not to be called Coercion Acts. The Return moved for seemed to apply to those Acts directed against agrarian crime; but when he was Lord Lieutenant the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was not directed against that class of crime, which was not particularly rife at the time, but against Fenianism.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE said, he would explain more fully upon Thursday evening what information he desired to obtain.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN suggested that the Return should include all similar Acts passed in the last century by the Irish Parliament.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at Five o'clock,
to Thursday next, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 13*th April*, 1886.

MINUTES.] — NEW WRIT ISSUED — *For* North-East Lancashire (Clitheroe Division), *v.* Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, baronet, Chancellor of the Duchy and County Palatine of Lancaster.

SELECT COMMITTEES—*First Report*—Ventilation of the House [No. 107]; Refreshment Charges in the House of Commons, *appointed.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Government of Ireland [181] [*Fourth Night*].

Second Reading — Commons Regulation and Inclosure (Totternhoe) Provisional Order * [166]; Commons Regulation (Stoke) Provisional Order * [164]; Companies Acts Amendment * [158].

Committee—Police Forces Enfranchisement [3] —R.P.

Committee—Report—Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act (1885) Amendment * [152].

Considered as amended—Third Reading—Copyhold Enfranchisement [26], and *passed.*

Withdrawn — Municipal Franchise (Ireland) (No. 2) * [75].

QUESTIONS.

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LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CLERK OF THE PEACE, LONDONDERRY.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Why the Clerk of the Crown and Peace for the county of Derry delayed, until the 7th January, payment of moneys lying in the Equity side of the County Court, Coleraine Division, amounting to £162 15*s.* 1*d.*, after receiving the order for payment to Morrison and Torrens on or about the 9th August; was he repeatedly applied to for it, and threatened with legal proceedings; was the Recorder in the county in the meantime conducting the Revision and Quarter Sessions; is it the common practice to delay payment of moneys to suitors in this Division of Londonderry; why is so much of the money now paid into Court in Equity cases left lying in bank without interest, when there are such facilities for investment; and, whether there have been many complaints by solicitors against the Clerk of the Crown and Peace, as to the difficulty of getting Equity business transacted in the Coleraine Court?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, he was informed that the delay from August to January was wholly caused by an irregularity in the form of the order brought in by Morrison's solicitor, and the whole of the October Sessions was allowed to pass without the error being rectified by the solicitor. It was not the practice to delay payment to suitors. As regards investments, money must always remain in Court, and was invested when it could be invested. There were complaints about the Clerk of the Peace not holding sittings at Coleraine. There was no statutory obligation on him to do so; but, the complaint having been brought to his notice, he had expressed his willingness to sit in Coleraine.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—BELFAST UNION WORKHOUSE — ABSENCE OF OFFICERS FROM DUTY.

MR. ALEXANDER BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been directed to the conduct of Adam S. Weir, assistant master, and Joseph W. Robb, sub-clerk in the Belfast Union Workhouse, having been absent from duty on Thursday 25th March last, taking part in a political contest for the Belfast Harbour Board on that day; and, if it be true that they received remuneration for their services from the Conservative party since that election; and, if so, whether it be compatible with their duties as Poor Law Union Officers; and, if not, will any notice be taken of their conduct?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that Messrs. Robb and Weir acted in an official capacity at the election of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners as poll clerk and Returning Officer respectively. They had both obtained leave of absence, and they were paid for their services by the Harbour Commissioners, and not by any political Party. The Guardians had decided that their officers should not be allowed to act as paid officers at elections without express permission beforehand, and the Local Government Board have asked the Guardians not to grant such permission, as the practice was by no means a desirable one.

COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION AT CAIRNDAISY, CO. LONDONDERRY.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it the fact that the school accommodation on the Draper's Estate at Cairndaisy, near Moneymore, county Derry, is utterly inadequate; that the building, in which eighty scholars are taught, is a thatched hut, 20 feet by 16; and, can anything be done by the National Education Commissioners to induce the opulent London proprietors to improve its condition?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, the accommodation in the school was for 40 pupils, and the average daily attendance was 49. When taken over by the Commissioners in 1875, the house was well thatched and floored and in good repair. Latterly, it had become too small. He understood that the Protestant rector, who was the manager, was doing his best to obtain a site for a new school. The Government had, of course, no control over the Drapers' Company, whose contribution was the not over munificent sum of £10.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say how many thousands a-year the Drapers' Company get out of this district?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: No, Sir.

BUILDING, &c. SOCIETIES—LOTTERY BALLOT.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, What is the total number of Building, Copyright Rule, and other Societies, in which money appropriations, free from interest, are obtained by lottery ballot; what is the total amount of such chance appropriations during the years 1883, 1884, and 1885 respectively; what price per cent. is usually paid by such Societies in order to redeem from winners their rights to such appropriations; whether the full amount of such loans are entered as assets in their accounts, or only the present value thereof; what commissions are paid to the promoters of such Societies on appropriations; whether his attention has been called to the report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies for the year 1884, Part A, page 46, and to a paper read by the Assistant Registrar of Friendly Societies published in *The Accountant* Newspaper of March 20th, 1886, in which the ballot for and sale of such appropriations are said to be "pure gambling;" and, whether he proposes to deal with this matter at an early date?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) (who replied) said: I have been in communication with the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and he tells me that Building Societies in which appropriations are obtained by lottery ballot are not distinguished on the Register from other societies, and it would be a matter of considerable labour so to distinguish them. I cannot give a definite answer either as to the total amount of these appropriations, or as to the price per cent usually paid to redeem the right to them. I would refer the hon. Member to the figures given in the last Report of Building Societies, and especially to the marginal notes with regard to the latter point. I believe this Report is all the obtainable information. Neither can the remuneration paid to the promoters of such societies be ascertained exactly; sometimes it is stated in the rules, and sometimes it is a matter of private arrangement; by Section 40 of the Building Societies Act only the net amount actually lent can be entered as an asset. The Registrar always calls attention to any violation of this rule. I have read the passage referred to in the Report of 1884, and also the paper published in *The Accountant.* The speculative character of these societies is strongly animadverted upon in both places; but it seems to me that persons who are careless enough to enter these societies without studying the provisions of their rules have only themselves to blame, and the Government cannot undertake to interfere in their behalf. Moreover, the Registrar informs me that no representation has been made as to any necessity for the interference of the Government.

PRISON BUILDING - NORWICH.

MR. COLMAN (Norwich) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the stone for the new prison about to be erected at Norwich is being worked at Portland with convict labour; and, if so, whether prison labour could be utilized in some other way than by putting it into competition with that of local stonemasons?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I am informed by the Prison Commissioners that the stone for Government buildings is always worked, when possible, either at Portland or some other prison. I believe it to be generally admitted that convict labour is properly employed on Government works, and on none more properly than prison buildings.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE IN THIS HOUSE.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the honourable Member for North-West Staffordshire, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, If arrangements can be made for the conveyance of Members' telegrams to the Telegraph Office by pneumatic tube or otherwise, from the Post Office in the Inner Lobby; and, if sufficient accommodation does not now exist to enable this to be done, if additional space can be provided?

MR. LEVESON GOWER (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Stafford, N.W.): There is great difficulty in the way of providing additional postal accommodation in the House, all available space being fully occupied for other purposes; but the First Commissioner of Works will confer with the Postmaster General on the subject. The Postmaster General has authorized a messenger to be stationed in the inner Lobby to facilitate the communication of Members with the telegraph office.

POST OFFICE — THE PARCEL POST—PAY OF CARRIERS.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether any increase of pay has been granted to Post Office carriers in any part of Great Britain on account of the increase of their work in connection with the Parcels Post; and, if so, whether a like increase of pay will be granted to the Post Office carriers in Ireland?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The wages of postmen in England, Scotland, and Ireland are constantly undergoing a process of adjustment to meet alterations of duty, whether in connection with the length of the walk, the hours of work, or the weight carried. Parcel work is not excluded from consideration.

THE NEW PUBLIC OFFICES.

MR. THOMAS BLAKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) asked the honourable Member for North-West Staffordshire, Whether any decision has been come to as to the description of stone to be employed in the erection of the new Public Offices; and, whether any steps have been taken to ascertain what description of stone is best adapted for the work, and what quarries could conveniently supply it in sufficient quantity?

MR. LEVESON GOWER (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Stafford, N.W.): No decision has yet been come to in regard to the description of stone to be used in the erection of the new Admiralty and War Office. A Committee was appointed last year by the then First Commissioner of Works, Lord Rosebery, to consider the question; and upon their recommendation some nine or 10 specimens of stone from quarries in Yorkshire and Scotland were obtained and submitted to experiments as to durability and porosity. Nothing further, however, has since been done in the matter.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS.

Colonel GUNTER (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, If his attention has been drawn to the comparative severity of the school examinations in Mr. Aldis's district, in North-east Yorkshire, and which has caused a serious diminution of the Government grant; and, if he would give comparative Returns for 1884 and 1885, showing the percentage of passes, merit grants, grants for class subjects, and total grants for each of those two years?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir Lyon Playfair (Leeds, S.): The attention of the Education Department was drawn to the inferior character of the examination papers in Mr. Aldis's division in North-East Yorkshire, and the Chief Inspector was directed to obtain uniformity of examination throughout his district. In consequence of complaints, two of the most experienced Inspectors were sent down to examine whether the standard had been raised too high; and they reported that the results of Mr. Aldis's examination would not have been materially different if a standard strictly equivalent to that of their own districts had been applied. As the fact of the change is admitted, the Returns are scarcely necessary.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—LOSS OF THE "ENTERPRIZE."

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to alleged neglect on the part of the Coastguard at Ratting Head in connection with the loss of a vessel (the schooner *Enterprize*), which went ashore on Sunday 4th instant; and, whether he would direct an inquiry into the case?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham) (who replied) said, that inquiries were now being made in connection with the loss of the *Enterprize*. No report of any neglect on the part of the Coastguard had been made to the Admiralty. When any information had been received on the subject he would gladly communicate it to the hon. Member.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (IRELAND) —THE SCIENCE AND ART DIRECTORY—RULE 12.

Mr. BERNARD KELLY (Donegal, S.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether, considering that the programme of the Sixth Class in the national schools of Ireland is as high as that of the Seventh Standard in the primary schools of England and Scotland, the Science and Art Department, South Kensington, will modify Rule 12 of the Science and Art Directory, applying to Irish schools, by substituting the words "been placed in," for the word "passed," so as to extend to that Country the same privilege as is given to England and Scotland by Rule 47 of the same Directory, or, if not, would the Department consider pupils of Irish national schools eligible to earn payments under the Department who have been examined once in Sixth Class, but who happen to fail in some essential subject; and, if so, can such pupilsbe presented at the coming May examinations?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): The present Rule has been arranged in concert with the Commissioners of National Education. I will place myself in communication with them with a view to see whether such a modification as that proposed can be made.

WEST INDIA ISLANDS—ST. VINCENT GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. Thomas Ross, lately Head Master of the Grammar School of St. Vincent; and if he will state the general terms upon which such Colonial appointments are held, whether for life or otherwise, and in what code of regulations such terms are set forth; the special terms under which Mr. Ross held his appointment, and the documents setting forth these terms; the rules for the regulation of the amount of compensation to be granted to such officers on their retiring from office, being deprived of office, or their office being abolished; whether any charges were ever made against Mr. Ross, or intimated to him, or substantiated against him, in terms of section 83 and subsequent sections of the Rules and Regulations for the Colonial Service; whether Mr. Ross has been deprived of his office, and for what reasons; the date of the abolition of the office, and what notice was given to Mr. Ross of its abolition, and under what official document such notice, if any, was given to Mr. Ross; whether a sworn document was lodged with the Governor of St. Vincent showing that, in consequence of Mr. Ross being turned out of his dwelling house and school buildings on a few days' notice and otherwise, he had lost £1,035; whether Her Majesty's Government have refused to pay Mr. Ross this amount of loss, or to compensate him for the loss of his office, and for what reasons and under what legislative authority; and, whether Her Majesty's Government now propose to pay the pecuniary loss which Mr. Ross has sustained, and to compensate him for the loss of his office, and to what extent?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): My hon. Friend has asked me a string of Questions which are more like a set of searching interrogatories in an action at law than a Question addressed to a Minister; but I will answer them as well as I can. My attention has been called to this case of Mr. Ross, late Head Master of the St. Vincent Grammar School. Such appointments are generally expressed to be held during Her Majesty's pleasure, and upon the terms set forth in the Colonial Rules and Regulations, chap. IV., which also regulate the amount of pension to be granted to Colonial officers on retirement from office. In Colonies like St. Vincent, where there is no law providing for pensions, the cases of officers whose office is abolished are generally dealt with on the principles of the Imperial Superannuation Acts, which give no absolute right to retiring allowances or to compensation, and do not deprive the heads of Departments of their power to dismiss persons from the Public Service without compensation. The St. Vincent Grammar School was established by a Colonial Ordinance, dated July 31, 1878, under which the Governor was empowered to appoint a Master of the School, and for just cause to remove or suspend such Master. Charges of neglect of duty and disobedience of orders were made and substantiated against Mr. Ross in January, 1885, in terms of Section 83 sqq. of the Colonial Rules and Regulations, and he was suspended by the Governor, with the advice of his Executive Council; but such suspension was not confirmed by Lord Derby, who thought his conduct was not of so grave a nature as to call for so severe a punishment. Mr. Ross's office was abolished by an Ordinance which received the Governor's assent on October 1, 1885, repealing that of July 31, 1878, and he was thereupon deprived of his office. The reason for this step was the utter failure of the Grammar School under Mr. Ross's direction to meet the requirements of such a school. Notice of the introduction of the Ordinance was given to Mr. Ross on September 12, 1885, in a letter addressed to him by the Lieutenant Governor informing him that his services would not be required after the 30th of the same month, and he was subsequently required to give up the house which he occupied as Master on November 1, 1885. It has been stated on Mr. Ross's behalf that his property was valued by a sworn valuator at £725, and that he has presented to the Governor a claim for £1,035 0*s.* 1*d.* in respect of loss sustained by him; but no Report on the subject has reached the Colonial Office. The late Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Frederick Stanley) refused to grant Mr. Ross any compensation for the abolition of his office, because of his inefficiency and neglect of duty; but in consideration of the shortness of the notice given him recommended the Governor of the Windward Islands to propose to the Legislative Council of St. Vincent the grant to Mr. Ross of a sum equivalent to three months' full salary. This grant Mr. Ross has declined to accept. Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government do not consider that they are under any obligation, legislative or otherwise, to make any further payment or compensation to Mr. Ross, and they do not propose to do so.

DISTRESS IN THE WESTERN ISLANDS (SCOTLAND).

MR. THOMAS BLAKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) (for Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Inverness-shire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether the Government has received the Special Reports on the destitution said to prevail in Kilmuir, in Skye, and other localities, and the demand made for seed corn; and, if any determination on the subject has been arrived at, will he mention same to the House?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): Yes, Sir; very full inquiry has been made in regard to this matter, and the Report received has been carefully considered by the Government, with the result that they consider that no sufficient cause has been shown for intervention of a special character such as is referred to in the Question.

ARMY—WAR BALLOONS.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to the proposal of General Hutchinson on aerial navigation, who has designed long "cylindrical navigable balloons of a most formidable character when used as engines of war;" and, whether Government has made any inquiries respecting an invention which, if proved successful, would lead to greatly diminished expenditure on our armaments?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell - Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): An inquiry into the merits of the invention referred to is now proceeding.

LAW AND JUSTICE—REWARDS FOR DISCOVERY OF CRIME.

Mr. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the fact, as stated at the Warwickshire Quarter Sessions last week, that the Government have arrived at the decision that they will not in future offer rewards for the detection and apprehension of murderers and other felons?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): I have to inform my hon. Friend that the question of the expediency of the offer of rewards by Government was most carefully considered by my Predecessors at the Home Office. Experience having shown that the rewards had failed in obtaining their object, the decision arrived at was that the system should be practically discontinued. The rule is not absolute, but it would only be departed from under the most exceptional circumstances.

BURIALS—ALLEGED SCANDAL AT TARPORLEY.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, since giving his answer to the Question put to him on the 2nd instant, relative to the burial of the child of the Reverend R. Charlesworth, a Wesleyan Minister, at Tarporley, he has received a letter from Mr. Charlesworth and any further information on the subject; and, whether he will communicate the same to the House?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): In reply to my hon. Friend I have to say that since my former reply to him on this subject my attention has been called to several newspaper extracts, and that I have also received letters from Canon Cooper, the rector, and from Mr. Charlesworth, the Wesleyan minister. I am satisfied that I have no occasion to modify two of the replies I gave—namely, as to the gate by which the mourners were admitted, and as to the bier, or rather bench, used on the occasion. But I said that the Wesleyan minister selected the gate, which was not strictly accurate, inasmuch as it was, apparently, selected by the sexton; and that he was satisfied that everything was done as he desired. In this latter respect, although I did not act upon information received only from the rector, I was undoubtedly in error, and I have to express my regret that I misled the House. I was not aware of the correspondence which had previously taken place between the Wesleyan minister and Canon Cooper, and if I had seen it I could not have used the remark to which I have just referred. Having reviewed the whole circumstances carefully, I venture now to suggest, in the interests of religion, that the controversy should cease, and I hope that the expression of regret of which I have made use may facilitate this result.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—SEVERE SENTENCES—CASE OF ABIGAIL BIRD.

Mr. WILLIAM SAUNDERS (Hull, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to a Report, which appeared on Monday in *The Standard* newspaper, that—

> "An elderly woman named Abigail Bird, a widow with five children dependent upon her for support, was charged at the Dartford Petty Sessions on Saturday with stealing three bundles of hurdle wood at Southfleet that morning. The

evidence went to show that a man, who escaped, was seen to steal the wood from Mr. Armstrong's plantation at Southfleet, and, when he found that he was being watched, he threw the wood into the prisoner's barrow and decamped. Prisoner acknowledged that she knew the man, and she was taken into custody on the charge of being implicated in the robbery. Prisoner protested that she knew nothing of the stolen wood. The Chairman said the prisoner would be imprisoned for one month with hard labour, and the Superintendent of the Police was instructed to take her children to the workhouse;"

and, will he cause inquiries to be made into the case?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I have received this morning two letters on the subject, and I have ordered an immediate inquiry to be made into the circumstances.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—ROBBERY OF FOREIGN SEAMEN AFTER BEING PAID OFF.

CAPTAIN EDMUND VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to letters in *The Standard*, signed by "A Shipowner," and headed "A Gross Abuse," in which it is stated, respecting a seaman paid off at the Board of Trade Office at Poplar—

> "That, no sooner had one of the foreigners, and a good sailor, left the office, after receiving the balance of his wages, some twelve pounds, than he was set upon by a crowd of roughs, and every penny of his money taken from him, as well as his A.B. discharge;"

whether any official inquiry has been made into the case; and, if so, whether he will state the results of the inquiry; and, whether, if the story be true, robberies of a like nature can be prevented by any further action on the part of the members of the Staff of the Poplar Office, or otherwise?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): I have seen the statement, and find on inquiry that it is substantially correct. A Norwegian sailor was robbed of his money; but, according to his own account, it was in a public-house, where he had gone with a number of men and called for two gallons of beer. Whilst he was paying for this a quantity of loose money was knocked out of his hand and scrambled for; and in a scuffle to recover it two Bank notes, and his certificate of discharge, were s[illegible] When this man was paid off he was urged by the Board of Trade officers to deposit his money and to take in lieu of it a money order, by which means he might have received his money at any port. This he declined to do, with the results I have stated. We do all we can to induce sailors to take advantage of these facilities, and I am glad to say an increasing number do so; but still there are a great many robberies, and it is impossible for the Board of Trade to prevent them.

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—CLERKS IN LOCAL PRISONS.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether his attention has been called to the case of the Clerks in the local prisons, urging that the distinction between 1st and 2nd Class Clerks might be abolished, and one grade formed, with a revised scale of pay, and with a similar maximum to that attained by the Lower Division Clerks, and that Clerks in charge of stores might be formed into a grade of Third Class Storekeepers, with duty pay of £30 per annum; and, whether the inquiry now being instituted by the Treasury into the position of the Lower Division and other Civil Service Clerks includes the case of Clerks employed in local prisons?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The attention of the Treasury has not yet been directly called to the position of the clerks referred to; but I understand that the Secretary of State for the Home Department has received Memorials on the subject, and has referred them to a Departmental Committee, on which the Treasury is represented.

STRIKES AND LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES.

MR. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If Her Majesty's Government will endeavour to obtain from America some detailed information regarding the recent strikes and action of labour organizations in that Country?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): Sir Lionel West, Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, was instructed on the 31st ultimo to forward a Report on various questions of interest connected with the labour organization of the United States The Report, when received, will be at once presented to Parliament, together with Reports on the strikes in the United States, France, and Belgium, which have also been called for.

CIVIL SERVICE VOLUNTEERS.

Lord ALGERNON PERCY (St. George's, Hanover Square) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the indulgence formerly granted to Volunteers belonging to the Civil Service, viz. to have leave on the Saturday before Easter without deducting it from their annual leave, will be granted this year?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): I do not know that the indulgence referred to was granted by the Treasury to all Volunteers in the Civil Service. The matter seems to me to be one falling within the discretion of the Heads of Departments, provided that no expense or inconvenience to the Public Service be thereby occasioned.

METROPOLIS—CITY OF LONDON COURT.

Lord ALGERNON PERCY (St. George's, Hanover Square) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Corporation of the City of London obtained powers under an Act of Parliament to acquire additional land adjoining the City of London Court, for the purpose of pulling down the existing Court and erecting a new one; whether the land required has long since been acquired; and, whether there is any prospect of the new Court being erected?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): I have no authority over the Corporation of the City of London; but I am informed that they did obtain statutory power, and have acquired land as stated in the Question, for the purpose of erecting a new Court, and plans and estimates have been duly prepared. However, owing to the increase of business in the Court it has become desirable that there should be an enlargement of the site originally proposed; and the Corporation tell me that they have now under consideration the question of purchasing a large corner house which was not included in their powers of compulsory purchase. The delay has arisen owing to the modification of the plans which the extension of the site will necessitate.

MOTION.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND ORDERS OF THE DAY—SALE AND PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Order of the Day relating to the Government of Ireland have precedence of the Notices of Motions and the other Orders of the Day."—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): On this Motion I wish to make a further appeal to the right hon. Gentleman with respect to the Land Bill. I have made inquiry, and I find that it will cause great inconvenience to many hon. Members who are largely interested in the subject if the introduction of that Bill is postponed until Monday. The right hon. Gentleman, as we know, intended to introduce the measure on Thursday; and I venture, even after his answer yesterday, to express a hope that by making a similar Motion to that he has now made he may be able to introduce the Bill on Friday. I need scarcely assure the right hon. Gentleman that there would be no desire on our part to prolong the discussion, and the probable result of introducing it on Friday would be that the debate would be completed that night, and Her Majesty's Government would be able to make progress with the Crofters Bill and other Business to which they attach importance on Monday. I hope, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman will reconsider his decision, and endeavour to meet what I believe to be the general wish of the House.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Perhaps I may say, with respect to the intention to move for leave to introduce the Land Bill on Thursday, I proposed that in the expectation that the debate on the Government of Ireland would have closed on Monday, and that I should have the present week for the purpose of preparing myself and putting myself in a position of accuracy on the difficult points of a very difficult measure. The real truth is that we are put under extreme pressure, and I cannot say it will enable me to prepare my statement as well as I should wish otherwise to do; but if it be for the convenience of the House I will endeavour to accede to the request.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

[FOURTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [8th April],

> "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the provision for the future Government of Ireland."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): Sir, in the speech with which the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) opened the debate yesterday in a tone of welcome moderation he made a claim which, I think, was very well founded. He said that this was a vast measure, having immense consequences. That cannot be denied. It has been called a revolutionary measure. I am not sure that the noble Lord used that phrase; but revolutions may be good revolutions, or they may be bad revolutions, according to the objects towards which they are directed, and the results which they produce. But no one can doubt the magnitude of this question, and that it requires, as the noble Lord says, very broad foundations upon which it should rest. And I think an answer ought to be given to the question of the noble Lord as to what is the nature of Home Rule—for this is a measure of Home Rule—what is the character of that demand, and what are the reasons upon which it is founded? I hold in my hand a book, probably familiar, from its appearance, to most Members of the House, which is called *The Radical Programme,* with a preface by the Right Hon. J. Chamberlain. In that may be found, I think, as good a statement of the question of Home Rule as I have anywhere seen. My right hon. Friend says—

> "What is the root of Irish discontent? Everyone recognizes the existence of the great grievances which distinguish the government of Ireland"——

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I beg my right hon. Friend's pardon. Is he under the impression that he is quoting my language, or is he only quoting the language of *The Radical Programme,* to which I wrote a preface?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Well, I am quoting from an article in *The Fortnightly Review* which was reproduced in *The Radical Programme.*

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I am sorry that my right hon. Friend should have mistaken my style, but that article was not written by me.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I accept the denial, of course; but I cannot refrain from reading the passage. It is as follows:—

> "What is the root of Irish discontent? Everyone recognizes the existence of the great grievances which distinguished the government of Ireland at the commencement of the century. Many of these have been removed. Yet still the Irish people are discontented, and probably there is more deep-rooted dissatisfaction with the Irish connection than at any previous period in the history of the Union. These reforms have been carried out by a foreign Government, without consultation with the Representatives of the Irish people, and under these circumstances they have been accepted without gratitude. A control which in any case would be borne with some impatience becomes odious and intolerable when it is the badge of a foreign supremacy. The sanction which the Castle seeks is to Irishmen that of a foreign race. What is needed is that Irish legislation should be domestic in its origin, and not foreign; that it should be initiated by Irish Representatives and adapted by them to the genius and requirements of the people; and that it should recognize the deep-rooted sentiment which in every nationality supports the claim for purely domestic control of purely domestic affairs."

These words may not be the words of my right hon. Friend, but at all events they went forth in *The Radical Programme,* with his name on the back of it; and if he had disapproved of them I suppose he would have expunged them.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I am very sorry to interrupt my right hon. Friend; but I am afraid he has not read the preface, which is really in my style, because it is written by me. In that preface I say I do not hold myself responsible for all the opinions which are expressed in the book.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: No, Sir; I do not suppose that my right hon. Friend does hold himself responsible for all the phrases. But what does he say in his preface?—

> "There is need, therefore, for the attempt made in the following pages to compile a definite and practical programme for the Radical Party."

I am only just reading the definite and practical programme. I suppose if he had not considered it practical and generally sound he would not have lent it the authority of his name. Then the article proceeds—

> "Yet during the lapse of centuries no decisive step has been taken towards the arrangement of a *modus vivendi* between that Kingdom, of which London is the capital, and that other Kingdom, of which the capital, Dublin, is distant from the Metropolis of the Empire less than a day's journey. Austria and Hungary have long since settled their serious difficulties. England, however, persists in misunderstanding, and, it must be said, misgoverning, Ireland. Surely it is no slight blot on the escutcheon of that country, which is the mother of Empires as it is the mother of free Parliaments, the chosen home of liberty, the parent of all institutions resting on a foundation of freedom, that she should as yet have failed to endow an island, an integral part of herself, with a Constitution that commands the loyalty and affection of its inhabitants."

That, I think, is a very clear statement of the claim that is made in respect of Home Rule. I do not approve of using the words "foreign Government." I have never employed the word "foreign" with regard to the relations of England and Ireland. But I will give an illustration the soundness of which I think my right hon. Friend will admit. Supposing the Corporation of Birmingham transacted the affairs of Liverpool, Manchester, and Leeds by a body sitting in Birmingham, and having a few representatives from the other places; we can quite understand, without treating Liverpool and Manchester as foreign cities, that they might be dissatisfied with that arrangement. Well, then, if it is admitted—and it has not been denied by my right hon. Friend and other eminent persons who have spoken in the debate—that the present arrangements with reference to the government of Ireland are not satisfactory, we have to consider what can be done. I do not think my right hon. Friend will contend that the arrangements made at the Union have produced that unity of sentiment between the two nations which no doubt the Act of Union was intended to bring about. The Government, to the best of their ability, have produced to this House and to the country a scheme for removing these evils which are pointed out in the passage to which I have referred. I am not going now into that scheme, and even with regard to the financial arrangement, upon which the noble Lord last night invited my opinions, I will reserve them until he has had the opportunity during the Easter Recess of studying the provisions which he will find in the Bill. But there is one question I should like to ask. If the Government Bill is to be condemned, what is the plan which is to be submitted in its place? Now I think that every Member of responsibility who has spoken has felt that it was not enough to condemn the policy of the Government, but that they were bound to state an alternative. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) accepted that responsibility. He has had great experience of Irish affairs, and what was his plan? His plan was to institute local bodies, who were to have local administration, local taxation under certain conditions, uncontrolled command of education and poor relief. Now, Sir, there is one very fatal objection to the alternative plan of my right hon. Friend, and that is that nobody accepts it. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends do not accept it. I am very much surprised if the Irish Members who sit above the Gangway accept it. I have seen nothing but denunciations in the Press representing the Protestant minority, of any plan which would give to local bodies in Ireland undisputed control of these affairs. One argument against our plan has been that it will afford leverage for further demands for extended powers. That argument applies equally to those local bodies which have been suggested. But the plan of local bodies, as I understand, is not accepted, but it is rather repudiated by the noble Marquess, and above all it is repudiated by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr.

Chamberlain); it is a child whom he has discarded. The other night he said it had been a good plan, but it had ceased to be so. It happens with fashions sometimes that when a particular style of dress has gone out of fashion in the Metropolis it travels down into the Provinces, and has a continued existence for a period there. It seems to me that the plan of six months ago of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham has only just reached the Border Burghs. The alternative plans in which the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs has bedizened himself are nothing but the cast-off ideas of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. Then what are we to do with this alternative plan? The right hon. Member for Birmingham says—"I no longer regard National Councils as a solution; it is only a very large proposal which can at any future time be accepted." Well, then, although the right hon. Members for Birmingham and for the Border Burghs resigned together, they do not think together. The very plan the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs offers us is rejected the very next night by its author, the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. With all his experience of Ireland the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs appears in his alternative plan to stand alone. He has not a single supporter. He is not supported by those (the Home Rule) Benches, nor by these (the Opposition) Benches, nor by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, nor by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale. I am afraid we cannot hope, in his solution, to find an alternative plan for the settlement of Ireland. The right hon. Member for Birmingham also propounded his plan. He congratulated the Government that their scheme was somewhat changed since, to our great regret, he left us. But his scheme has marvellously changed also, and in these circumstances he propounded a plan of great importance the other night. It was not one of which he ever gave us the advantage; it was not an alternative he ever submitted to our consideration as a possible plan for the settlement of the government of Ireland. But what is that plan? It was not explained with great definiteness, but it was said to be upon the lines of federation. He illustrated it by the cases of the United States, by Germany, and by Italy. Well, federation is an idea, I suppose, with which everybody is familiar; and the essence of federation, as pointed out by the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Healy), is that it pre-supposes, *ex vi termini*, that there are independent bodies, previously existing, to be federated. Before the federation of the United States of America took place the 13 States were separate Sovereign Bodies; they were so at the Declaration of Independence; they were so when their independence was recognized, and some years before the Federal Union was established. If they had not been there could have been no federation. It was so with Germany, and so with Italy; they were separate Sovereign Bodies which were the subject-matter of federation. And to deny that federation pre-supposes the establishment of independent Legislatures is to deny the fundamental condition upon which federation rests. Nobody must know that better than my right hon. Friend, because he is the author of a great federation which has its centre at Birmingham. How could you have a Central Federation if you had no local Caucuses? Those local Caucuses have independent existence, which is the basis of that federation. I think my right hon. Friend ought to have explained to us what are to be those separate bodies in Great Britain and in Ireland which are to be the subject-matter of the federation which he recommends. But federation is a business which would take some time, and my right hon. Friend perceives that there must be some more immediate measure. He referred to the "Truce of God," as he called it. Well, that "Truce of God," in his view, is the cessation from outrage and crime which he attributed to the action of the National League. But is he quite certain that "Truce of God" will survive the rejection of this Bill? ["Oh, oh!"] Yes; because the consequence of the rejection of this Bill will be the resumption of the policy announced by the late Government, which was to suppress the National League. If the "Truce of God" is dependent upon the National League, surely the suppression of the National League will terminate, at least, that form of truce. But, as a substitution, and for the sake of making another truce, which is to go, I suppose, by a different name, my right hon. Friend has a plan. What is that plan? He is going to stay evictions by Act of Parliament. Now, the first question I ask upon that is, "Who has agreed to that proposition?" Has he got the adhesion of the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale upon that point? Has he secured the approval of the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) to the staying of evictions? Has he obtained the consent of the right hon. Baronet and the noble Lord on the Front Opposition Bench? If he has not, I should like to know how this is a practicable policy. He says that, having suspended evictions, he will

> "Lay on the Government the duty of lending to the landlords who may have need of it such a proportion of their rents as will save them from necessity and privation."

He has made an estimate of the amount, which will be £4,000,000 for six months. Meanwhile, he says, there is to be a Committee or a Commission, which is to be composed of all Parties and of both sections of Irish Members, who are to settle the Irish Land Question; and I presume the hon. and gallant Member for Armagh (Major Saunderson) and the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Healy) will sit together on that Commission, which is to settle the Irish Land Question in six months. I am a little doubtful as to the Chancellor of the Exchequer finding £4,000,000 every six months; it is a subject which causes me some anxiety. I do not know whether any Irish landlords would be upon that Commission; all I can say is that if I were an Irish landlord and were upon that Commission, and if there were an Act of Parliament taking money from so excellent a milch cow as the English Exchequer at the rate of £4,000,000 in six months to pay me my rent, I should seek every opportunity for prolonging their deliberations. I am sorry to say I cannot promise my right hon. Friend that in the approaching Budget we have made a provision of £4,000,000 to pay the rents of the Irish landlords who may desire that we should do so. This is what my right hon. Friend has offered as an alternative solution of the Irish Question to the Bill of the Government. I am afraid that that does not appear to us to be a practicable solution, or one that is likely to settle the Irish difficulty. I now pass to the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington). He knows well, greatly as he is esteemed and respected by every man in this House, and in this country, there is no man who thinks of him with higher and deeper respect than I do, who have served so long under him and with him. I am quite sure there is nothing that the House and the country look to with more anxiety than to know what are the views of my noble Friend upon this question. I have listened to and examined his opinions, with which I have been long acquainted, and which he has stated in this House. He is not favourable even to the local bodies recommended by the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs. He says in his speech—

> "I have never concealed my own opinion that the extension to Ireland of any considerable changes in what we understand as local self-government might be fraught with considerable difficulty, and might add considerably to the difficulties of Ireland."

So far from thinking that the extension of local self-government in Ireland would remove such difficulties, his opinion is that it would considerably increase them. He has not spoken with the absolute condemnation he did a short time ago; he has now spoken with more moderation, but still in a manner which indicates that this is not the solution which he thinks would remove the difficulties of Ireland. That is his judgment on the plan suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs. But what does he think of the scheme of federation recommended by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain)? My noble Friend will not hear of federation. He says—

> "It is impossible we can establish anything resembling the federation in America in the remotest degree without a dual Constitution"—

that is perfectly true—

> "and the reconstruction of the whole Constitution of this country; and no one thinks of that for a moment."

My noble Friend says that immediately after it has been recommended by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. Then, so far as we have got with the alternative proposals, the alternative of my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs is rejected by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, and the alternatives of both are rejected by my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale. That does not help us very much in the solution of the Irish difficulty. What does my noble Friend think might and ought to be done? He says—and this is most important—"He did not admit the impossibility of governing Ireland by a mingled system of remedial and repressive legislation." He justly eulogizes, in my opinion, the administration of Lord Spencer. It is to that which he evidently looks as the model upon which the government of Ireland ought to be restored. I think my noble Friend will admit that I am stating the case fairly when I say that what he looks to is, in diplomatic phrase, the restoration of the *status quo ante* Carnarvon. My noble Friend said —and the passage is remarkable—

> "I believe that if that law"—that is, the Crimes Act—"instead of terminating as it did at the close of last Session, had been a permanent Act"—mark the "if"—"to be maintained as long as the necessity continued, and if at the same time the change of government last year had not occurred, the Prime Minister would not have declared that the future government of Ireland on the same lines as the past was impossible."

It has been said that there is great virtue in an "if;" but history is full of such morals. If many things had not happened, all things would not be as they are. I remember an old nursery jingle in my childhood—

> "If 'ifs' and 'ands' were pots and pans,
> There'd be no need for tinker's hands."

Oh, but there are a great many tinkers, and before you have got rid of those "ifs" there will be a great many more. Well, Sir, my noble Friend said, and said very truly—

> "Whatever the fate of this measure, its mere introduction by a responsible Government will have done much that can never be recalled."

That is perfectly true; but it is equally true of the events of last June. The consequences of those events never can be recalled. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) stated the other night that this was a matter to which I had attached considerable importance. That is perfectly true. In my mind, those events entirely changed the whole aspect of the Irish Question. ["Oh, oh!"] I was convinced at the time—I am more convinced now—that those events and the course then taken by the Conservative Party made Home Rule inevitable. Well, Sir, I do not desire to speak of these matters in any spirit of Party recrimination. I am stating the facts, and I wish to state them as facts. This debate has been free from the spirit of Party recrimination. I am not stating that the course then taken was a right or a wrong course; all I say is that it has had certain results, and those results cannot be recalled. Now, what was the character of that act? It was unquestionably a condemnation of the policy which Lord Spencer had pursued. No one can doubt that; that was involved in the very nature of the transaction. The noble Lord stated—I am not reproaching him for that—that he had no confidence in Lord Spencer, but that he had confidence in Lord Carnarvon, and that the policy which he recommended would be successful just in proportion as it was opposed to the policy of Lord Spencer. That is a statement of fact, and I am applying it to the view of my noble Friend that you can return to the policy of Lord Spencer. Then it was not merely that the Crimes Act was allowed to expire. I cannot agree with the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) that the case is at all analogous to the expiration of the Peace Preservation Act in 1880; because all the events—the great and the terrible events—which had occurred between 1880 and 1885 had in the interval entirely altered the whole Irish situation. It was not merely that the late Government determined to allow the Crimes Act to expire; but the whole of the General Election was fought out upon these lines. I say, then, that that conduct made such a complete change in the attitude of the Conservative Party with reference to the former system of government in Ireland and in the whole aspect of affairs, that I venture to say to my noble Friend that the idea of returning to the system of government as administered in Ireland by Lord Spencer is impracticable. It showed that it was impossible to count upon a stability or continuity in such a policy even in the Conservative Party, and that at the first temptation of Party advantage they would cast it to the winds. No one knows better than my noble Friend that Lord Spencer himself is of that opinion. That is a very grave fact in this problem, It will have great weight in this House; it will have great weight in the country. Sir, when my noble Friend thinks of reverting to the system of government under Lord Spencer, where will he find a better man to carry out that policy than Lord Spencer? But is it only Lord Spencer who is of that opinion? We have had many Ministerial explanations lately; but there is one Ministerial resignation of which we have had no explanation—the Ministerial explanation of the resignation of Lord Carnarvon. [Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL here whispered something across the Table to the hon. Gentleman.] Oh, yes; we saw the letters, and he was to resign in six months. He resigned in such a hurry and at such a critical moment that you were obliged to have a hypothetical Queen's Speech. The Government might have made arrangements by which that resignation, so long meditated, might have taken place at a time which would have permitted you to put a positive policy in the Queen's Speech; but that resignation took place at that critical moment, and we have not yet heard from Lord Carnarvon a statement of his views with reference to the future government of Ireland. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentlemen who sit upon the Bench opposite are willing to declare that they adhere to the policy of my noble Friend to return to the policy of Lord Spencer for the future government of Ireland. If they do so, all I can say is that it will be a splendid example of political repentance. My noble Friend said that he was in favour of a policy of mixed repressive and remedial measures. We know what the repressive measures are, because he referred to them; but what are the remedial measures which my noble Friend is ready to support? I have shown how he is not in favour of the extension of local government to any great extent in Ireland; and I do not know what, therefore, is the particular policy of remedial measures that he recommends. Sir, I find no greater help for the settlement of Ireland in the alternatives of my noble Friend than I do in those of my two right hon. Friends to whom I have previously referred. We have one hope left, and that is in my right hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) who is to follow me in this debate. I would intreat him to give us some satisfaction. Among the eminent persons who unfortunately differ from us, and who are scattered about these Benches, it would, indeed, be a satisfaction if we could at last find that there was one of them who agreed with any of the others upon the same lines. I should like to hear from my right hon. Friend whether he agrees with my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs in the policy of a Central Body in Ireland. I should like to hear whether he is in favour of the suspension of evictions with £4,000,000 of rental to the landlords—he is a great financier—and whether he is in favour of federation. I should like to know whether the "skeleton at the feast" has settled the bill of fare with mine host of "the unauthorized programme;" and whether Rip Van Winkle will be of the party. We should like to hear these things from my right hon. Friend, and then, perhaps, we shall have a collective view of the alternatives of Irish policy. But there remains one thing, and it is a very important thing to ask—What is the policy of the Benches opposite? The noble Lord the Member for Paddington made a very able speech last night. He desired an amnesty of the past.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I referred to the remark of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I do not wish to quarrel with the noble Lord; there is no man in this House who has more occasion to desire that the waters of Lethe should roll over his successive Irish policies, not one of which is consistent with another, than he. I will not disturb the harmony of that amnesty. I am only thinking of what the noble Lord's opinions were 24 hours ago. As my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) observed in his weighty speech, and very truly observed, there is nothing in that speech which committed the noble Lord to anything else but an absolute condemnation of this particular scheme—there is nothing to preclude him from going in for Home Rule on a much larger scale——

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman would not wish to misunderstand me. Both the hon. Member for Bedford and the right hon. Gentleman himself are completely in error. If the right hon. Gentleman will take the trouble in his spare moments, if he has any, to look at what I said last night and on former quite recent occasions, and in my Election address to the constituency of Birmingham, he will certainly find that I have pronounced over and over again against repeal in any shape or form.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I admit that it is difficult enough to explain the past of the noble Lord; but to forecast his future is beyond the reach of prophecy, and therefore I shall not pursue that theme. But I must say—I may be mistaken, but I did think that, like his great master the late Lord Beaconsfield, whom I remember denouncing the terrible effects of a £5 franchise just at the moment when he was intending to carry household suffrage, he was perhaps exercising some of that politic reserve which is practised by the wise and prudent. For the moment, then, taking as I do most sincerely the disclaimer of the noble Lord, I ask what is the policy of Gentlemen opposite on this question? The noble Lord in his remarks, when asked what his policy was at the beginning of the Session, gave a definite answer. We know what that was. It was declared somewhat late. It was put hypothetically in the Queen's Speech and definitely on the 26th of January, and it was partly a negative and partly a positive policy. As regards the negative policy, this is what the noble Lord said on the 26th of January—

> "The present state of Ireland is not, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, one which would be favourable to the consideration of any measures for extending local government to Ireland."

But as to repressive measures, on March 4th the noble Lord said—

> "If I were in power to-morrow, I would no more think of renewing the Crimes Act for that purpose than of flying."—(3 *Hansard*, [302] 1993.)

Well, but is the noble Lord going to fly? And if not, how is he going to settle matters with my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale? The positive policy of the late Government was to suppress the National League. Very well; but, as I have already remarked, that would put an end to the "Truce of God" described by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham. But if it is so easy to put an end to the National League, why did not the late Government do it? They had some weeks in which they might have set to work at the end of the last Session of Parliament. They condemned Lord Spencer and the previous Government for not having done it. Why did not they do it themselves last July and August? Why was not the suppression of the National League part of the programme of the Conservative Party at the last Election? Why was not the suppression of the National League put into the Queen's Speech? At that mysterious time when Lord Carnarvon disappeared in significant silence, did he recommend the suppression of the National League? Were all the Cabinet agreed on the suppression of the National League? If so, why did they not put it in the Queen's Speech? [Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL was understood to intimate that it was.] I venture to say that it was not in the Queen's Speech. But if you are to suppress the National League you will have to resort to measures of coercion such as you never yet have employed. I know enough of the Government of Ireland to state that much. Well, the noble Lord opposite is ready, perhaps, to assent to that. My noble Friend the Member for Rossendale may be ready for that. I do not know whether he is or not; but there is one person that I should like to ask whether he is ready for it, and that is my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham. My right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham is looked up to, and deservedly so, by the Radical Party as one of those men who greatly added to its strength and authority; and I ask him if his plan of giving £4,000,000 to the Irish landlords for six months—if his plans of federation do not succeed—if he comes to the "end of his Latin," whether he is prepared to recommend the policy of coercion that will then become necessary? Will he accept the measures of the Party opposite, who, rejecting as they do the extension of local government to Ireland, call for the suppression of the National League? Is he ready to accept the measures which will be necessary for that purpose? That is a very important question. If he is, then I cannot understand why the noble Lord opposite (Lord Randolph Churchill) should not yet become one of the Seven Champions of Birmingham. The more you look at all these alternatives and the more you examine them, the more certain in my opinion it becomes that there is no alternative—none that has yet been suggested—to the plan of the Government, except the coercion of Ireland. That I think is the net result of the examination of all the plans that have been submitted. Now, coercion is a policy. I admit that. But in order to carry out that policy, you must have certain conditions. You must have a strong Government—a Government determined and persistent and in harmony with itself; and you must have a Government that is supported by an overwhelming majority in this House and in the country. I think that is a fair description of the necessary conditions of a Government of coercion. My noble Friend in the peroration—I may call it the noble peroration—of the speech that he addressed to the House on Friday pictured the state of things in which there should be a truce to Party spirit and a suspension of Party organization in this House. Sir, that is an idea which has been the dream of some good men, and it has been the scheme also of some bad men. The idea that you could dispense with Party government and Party organization in this country was, if I remember rightly, first broached by Lord Bolingbroke, as a means of overthrowing the Whig Party, who supported the Revolution Settlement. It was inherited by Lord Bute; and by him taught to George III., and it was the great cause of the evils and disasters of the early years of that Monarch's Reign. The man who most loudly and most wisely protested against such attempts was the great political teacher of the historical Party of which my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale is the illustrious Leader and ornament. Anybody who remembers the language in which Mr. Burke, in his famous tract on *The Causes of the Present Discontent*, dilates on the dangers and mischiefs in Parliamentary government of such an attempt, will, I think, agree with me in the opinion that I have formed of schemes of this description. The experiment was tried by a great man, perhaps the greatest figure in English politics—I mean Lord Chatham. Mr. Burke in his great speech on conciliation with America described the Administration of Lord Chatham—that Administration, I mean, in his latter years which tarnished the glories of his earlier life—in a well-known passage which I venture to recall to the recollection of the House. It may be useful at the present juncture. It runs thus—

> "For a wise man he seemed to me at that time to be governed too much by general maxims. One or two of these maxims led him into measures that were greatly mischievous to himself, and for that reason among others perhaps fatal to his country; measures the effects of which I am afraid are for ever incurable."

Then he describes an Administration formed out of the fragments of Parties without any regard to Party organization. I recommend the words to the attention of my noble Friend—

> "He made an Administration so checkered and speckled; he put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified mosaic; such a tesselated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers; King's friends and Republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies found themselves they knew not how pigging together heads and points in the same truckle-bed. It was indeed a very curious show; but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand on."

Had Edmund Burke been living to-day I should have thought from that passage that he might have been a newspaper reporter describing a patriotic meeting at an Opera-house. Let my noble Friend beware—where Lord Chatham failed even he might not succeed. I may be reminded that Burke in his larer years proved unfaithful to the principles he then taught. He became the leader of a great secession, most disastrously in my opinion to the history of this country. You may think differently, but permit us who cherish the traditions of the Whig Party to think so. Yes, the secession of the Portland Whigs was the potent cause of most of the disasters which attended the close of the last and commencement of the present century. It was a bad thing for the Liberal Party—it was a bad thing for the Tory cause—and led them into excesses into which they never would have been betrayed but for that secession of the Whigs. There remained, however, still faithful to their principles and their Party a small but illustrious band of statesmen who in those dark and stormy times kept alive the sacred fire and preserved the ark of the Liberal Party, men who were faithful and not afraid, and among that band there were no names more famous than those of Cavendish and of Grey. You say that you want a strong Government; but to make a strong Government you do not only want eminent men, you want a continuous policy and you want solidity of action. There are many eminent men who may form a Government at the present moment—that I do not deny for a moment. There is Lord Salisbury, and there is the noble Lord opposite (Lord Randolph Churchill). I heard it said the other day that the great thing the country wanted was a Government of moderate men. I said—"I am glad to hear it, because I am a moderate man myself." I asked who were the moderate men, and it was replied—"There is the noble Lord the Member for Paddington and there is the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham." [*Opposition cheers and laughter.*] Oh, I am going on with the enumeration. There is the noble Lord before me and there is the noble Marquess behind me (the Marquess of Hartington), there is the right hon. and learned Gentleman behind me (Sir Henry James), there is the right hon. Member for Edinburgh, there is the right hon. Member for Birmingham, and there is the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs. They are all very eminent men, and they can say—"We are seven." They remind me of a tragedy of classical antiquity, and they may become known in the future history as "the Seven against Ireland." No, it is not by breaking up Parties that you will constitute a strong Government. When a planet explodes you may have coruscations of shooting stars; they are brilliant but they are evanescent, and they no longer constitute a planetary system. Therefore, Sir, I cannot join the noble Lord in his dreams of the Millennium, in which "the calf and the young lion and the fatling will lie down together" with a little child (perhaps from Paddington) to lead them. There has been a great deal of aristocratic secession. For one, I am sorry for them. I think that they are a bad thing for the country, and especially for the aristocracy, for of this we may be sure, that if the aristocracy of England is going to range itself with the party of ascendancy in Ireland, the democracy of England will side with the Irish people. [*Home Rule cheers and cries of* "Shame!"]

I do not know why you should cry "Shame!" There are two sides to every question. You have taken one; why should not we take the other? No; if you want a policy of coercion, you want the statesmanship of a Cromwell or a Strafford to carry it into effect; if you have a policy of coercion you must look forward to a policy of "Thorough," and you will not carry out such a policy by means of an *omnium gatherum* Government patched up out of the broken fragments of shattered Parties. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham in part of his speech—a part in which I thought I discovered an unwonted Orange flavour—said that Ulster would resist, and that she would not be coerced. That would be, of course, if the Bill passed; but if the Bill does not pass, what of the rest of Ireland? Will not they resist? The views of the right hon. Gentleman are based upon coercion, and you may depend upon it that this policy of coercion is like strong drink—the more you take of it the more you will want of it. That you may have a policy of coercion popular in this country I do not deny—the war against your American Colonies was once popular in this country. It was by an appeal to the pride and the passions of the people that that war was maintained; but before long the people became sick of it. Can the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain)—can even the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands)—promise and vow on behalf of the Radical Party that they will never become sick of coercion—a coercion which, I venture to say, to be successful will have to go to the length of suspending all the elementary rights of Englishmen. There is a great objection raised on the part of hon. Members opposite to the Irish Members leaving this House, and leaving this House, as I understand, voluntarily. Hon. Members opposite say—"Oh, that is a repeal of the Union." Are they quite sure that one of the results of a policy of coercion will not be that they will have to compel the Members for Ireland to leave this House against their will; and then, with your own hands and of your own motion, you will repeal the Union by force? You may try coercion and you may fail, and if you do that will be of all disasters the greatest that can befal this nation. You may, after all, have to come back to a policy which you rejected, but you will come back to it discredited and dismayed. It will then not be giving a concession; it will be a capitulation. Now, Sir, my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) spoke last night upon one point to which I must refer, though I feel the necessity of speaking on it with great reserve—I mean on the subject of the Irish nation which lives in the United States. I entirely concur with the noble Lord in what he said—that this House and this country would never be influenced for one moment in their course upon this or any other question by the action of dastardly assassins. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) referred to Ford and others. I have had occasion to know a good deal about this question; but this I know, that as regards the Irish nation in America, as numerous, I believe, as the Irish in Ireland, having the same sympathies as Irishmen at home, they have not generally been parties to the action of dynamitards. The action of those men has received the universal condemnation of the great body of the people of the United States, and I have no doubt such conduct will always be repudiated by the body of the people in America. But if you reject this Bill, then I believe there will be a condemnation and a disapprobation on the part of the right-thinking people both of Irish and American blood, of your refusal of this concession to the Irish people. This is a consideration which, in my opinion, you cannot afford to neglect. Do you think they will not say to themselves, and justly say—"There was an offer to the Irish people by the foremost statesman of his age; the offer was confirmed by Lord Spencer, who had a great knowledge of the condition of Ireland; and yet the English Parliament refused it?" Nor will that sentiment be confined to America alone. Do you think that if you reject this Bill, if you have to come, as I fear you will have to come, to measures which every man will deeply regret, there will not be a voice in many an English home which will say—"Could these things not have been prevented?" Will they not say—"If you had taken the advice of Spencer and of Gladstone we should never have come to this pass?" And then they will curse the counsellors who diverted them from the paths of peace. That is a contingency, in my opinion, you are bound to carry in your minds. You may reject this Bill, but its record will remain. The history of England and Ireland can never be as if this offer had never been made. You may kill it now, but its ghost will ever haunt your festivals of coercion. Well, Sir, I may be asked, and I have often asked myself—"Have you no misgivings? Are you sure, are you confident, that there is no danger in the gift of these great powers to the Irish people?" If I am to answer that question honestly, I cannot say so. "*Nescia mens hominum cœcique futuri.*" I cannot predict the future; I am sensible of the possibility of the dangers that may arise. I am not presumptuous enough to say that I feel sure. I listened to the speech of the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Healy), and in the striking conclusion of that speech, breathing the language of reconciliation, I thought I heard the tones of conviction, not only of the intellect, but of the heart. It is enough for me to hope that this measure may, at least, bring peace and good-will between England and Ireland—peace and good-will not resting upon a Statute, but upon the spirit of the people. That is a blessing, which is worth purchasing at some risk. But if these hopes are deceived, if these powers are abused, if dangers to the Empire arise, we are not without resource. The Irish are under 5,000,000; we are over 30,000,000. If they prove themselves unfit for the trust we have confided to them, if the safety of the Empire demand it, we can, and we shall, resume the grant. We shall do so with the feeling that we have exhausted the last chance of conciliation. We shall then have with us not only the overwhelming forces of physical superiority, we shall have a force greater still—we shall have with us the unanimous voice of a united people, and the consenting conscience of the civilized world. That force, if you reject this Bill, you cannot, and you will not, have for your policy of coercion. I cannot accept the responsibility of entering upon a policy of force now which I believe will fail. It is for that reason that I have stood, and that I still stand, by the great enterprize of my right hon. Friend.

Mr. GOSCHEN (Edinburgh, E.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the task which is placed upon me, in having to speak after my right hon. Friend, is not an easy one. We have heard, I will not say the opinions, but the language of the latest convert to Home Rule. It will not be in my power, and I would not attempt if I could, to follow his example in this debate, in endeavouring to amuse the House, as he most successfully amused it, by the most pleasant banter over a Bill which so deeply concerns the fate of the Empire. We wanted to hear arguments in favour of the Bill; and, instead of that, my right hon. Friend will not deny that the greater part of his speech was taken up with amusing personalities and recriminations. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I think that hon. Members opposite will not deny that the personalities were amusing, and that they were personalities. I do not mean for one moment to convey the impression that they were not good natured; but they led the House away from the most important issue which is now before us. I confess that, wishing to grapple with some of the points, wishing to bring some of the most salient points of it before the House, I feel that it may possibly be difficult to secure the attention of the House to matters certainly not so amusing as the speech of my right hon. Friend, but far more important. That speech was festive in one way, but it was melancholy in another. It seemed to reveal the impotence of the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland to deal with a most important crisis. My right hon. Friend is not the first Cabinet Minister who has held language to the effect that consequences which may convulse Ireland and convulse this House will ensue from the rejection of this Bill. And I may say, I hope without offence, that we are almost being terrorized, when I recall the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and when I recall the speech of the hon. Member for Bedford. What is the upshot of those speeches? The upshot of those speeches is that we must pass this Bill, and that there is no other course open. You are landed at this point—that there is no longer sufficient power, spirit, or consistent policy in this country to deal with this great crisis unless we pass this Bill. The argument is such a melancholy one that I do not wish to overstate it. But did hon. Members listen to the speech of the Chief Secretary upon this point? What are those constant references to Irish-Americans beyond the sea? Sir, we must deal with this Bill on its merits; and with regard to its merits what single word fell from my right hon. Friend? The criticism upon the Bill has not been slight. Some people think that the Bill has been torn almost into shreds. ["No!"] That is the opinion of some people; and I think that if we remember what questions have been asked—questions with regard to the veto, with regard to the two Orders sitting together, with regard to finance—surely this House, we who sit upon this side of the House, might have been entitled to some answer from my right hon. Friend. But my right hon. Friend did bring forward one argument in favour of the Bill. He rested the Bill upon one point, and that was an anonymous and disowned quotation from "the Radical Programme." That was the one single argument in favour of the Bill, except that there was no other alternative, and that therefore the Bill must be passed, and he pointed to the consequences of rejecting it. But is this responsible government? Is this Bill to be put before the House without its being shown that it is a workable plan? Are we not entitled to know whether it will do two things which it claims to do, whether it will be a final settlement, and whether it will work? I think the Prime Minister argued that this was one of its chief claims to our acceptance—that it would be a final settlement. Now, I hope the House will permit me, and that hon. Members from Ireland will permit me, to examine the Bill from that point of view. But before I proceed to do so I should wish to say something with regard to the argument that the Irish Members have determined that there is to be Home Rule, and that, therefore, according to the system of representative government, Home Rule must be granted, or we should be refusing the wish of the Irish people. Now, I want to know, supposing these 86 Members had gone somewhat further, and had asked for this Bill without the checks which have been put into it by my right hon. Friend, should we then have been equally bound to listen to the voice of those 86 Members? Suppose they had demanded separation, should we have been bound to listen to their voice? Is the Imperial Parliament bound to listen to the voice of the majority of any particular portion of the Empire, and to come to a conclusion in accordance with that voice? Suppose Wales were to ask for a separation by a majority of its Representatives—suppose Scotland were to ask for it—in what position should we be? Should we be bound to accept this doctrine, that we must listen to the voice of that portion of the Empire?—because I refuse to say that it is the voice of a separate nation which we now hear. Again, I ask what would, under this system, become of the voice of Ulster? Ulster has not decided. [An hon. Member: 17 to 16.] Yes; and on that majority, would it be right to hand over Ulster to the new Parliament? Remember it is not this majority of one which has been urged as an argument; it is that of 86 against a smaller number. It is upon the great balance of opinion expressed. I say that this argument with regard to what will happen unless the voice of 86 Members is listened to is an argument most dangerous for this country. But it is also said, What will these 86 Representatives from Ireland do if we refuse this Bill? Well, that lies in their own breasts. But I trust I may assume that they will continue Constitutional courses, because, if my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister thinks he has to deal with a body of men who, if they cannot get their demands granted in the form they ask, will then cease from Constitutional courses, he shows that he has not that trust in them which he ought to have in those who are, in his view, to be the future Governors of Ireland under the Bill. Let me put this before the House; and I entreat full consideration. What will be the freedom of the great majority, not only of England and Scotland, but of England, Ireland, and Scotland together, if we acknowledge that our Constitution has come to this point, that whenever 86 determined men in this House say they will have some particular measure, that measure must be granted? I see the enormous difficulty that will ensue from the rejection of this measure, if it is rejected. No man can be blind to it, and, therefore, everyone must speak with a great sense of responsibility; but I say you cannot admit this argument, that there are no means of dealing with a determined minority of this House except by acceding to its demands. If that argument holds good we should be at the mercy of every discontented section of the country and every discontented class. Let us, therefore, look at this Bill on its merits and see whether it is likely to be a final settlement—whether it is likely to meet the case—and let us put aside from us these arguments, impressively as they are put before us, that if we do not grant what is asked we shall be met with difficulties which the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland cannot overcome. We have heard much in this debate with regard to the foreign garb in which laws are placed before the Irish people. The Prime Minister has put this in the forefront—I think he called it "the whole basis of the mischief"—that laws were presented to the Irish people in a foreign aspect and a foreign garb. But I want to know, is it only the foreign aspect of these laws which is distasteful to the Irish people, and would they be satisfied with these identical laws if they had come to them in a native dress? ["No, no!"] No; I entirely agree that they would have been dissatisfied with these laws even if they had come in a native dress. And I ask the House to give especial attention to this point, because in this whole debate Ministers and the Friends of the Bill have mainly, if not exclusively, dealt with the national sentiment. The case has been put before us in this form—there is this overwhelming national sentiment, and we are bound, if we can, to give effect to it. All the analogies, historical and contemporary, are upon the national ground. But is this only a national and half a sentimental difficulty with which we have to deal? ["No, no!"] Members from Ireland say "No!" They know too well, and we all know too well, that that is not the case, and that side by side with this sentimental difficulty—I call it sentimental in the best sense—we have a fearful agrarian difficulty, which through tens and tens of years has baffled the efforts of statesmen? The difficulty is agrarian as well as national, and therefore it is not enough to say that the whole basis of the mischief is that the laws have a foreign garb. The basis of the mischief largely consists in this, that the views of the majority of the Irish people with regard to some of the chief principles of legislation are different from those of the inhabitants of Scotland and England. I speak not only of what I may call Saxon laws, but of the laws which prevail in every civilized country. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Hon. Members differ from me. I trust I may pursue this argument without interruption. I maintain, and it cannot be denied, that Irish views are in marked contrast to all the economical literature of the Continent. I do not now make it, and I do not intend to make it, a ground of blame; but I say that the attitude of the Irish people, partly from history, partly from traditions, perhaps partly from the misgovernment of their country, for which we are paying so heavy a price, towards laws which are recognized in other countries is a hostile attitude and different from the attitude of most of the nations of Europe. ["No, no!"] In what country of Europe would a No-Rent Manifesto be issued? [Mr. W. O'BRIEN: It was necessary.] It was necessary is the answer. Yes, that is just one of those views which are hostile to the views of most European societies. The hon. Member has supplied me with the very illustration I want. I hold this—and I believe there are few who doubt it, but I do not wish to press it beyond what is right and due—that hon. Members opposite have been contending for what they would themselves not object to hear called revolutionary changes in many of the laws that regulate society. It is because the laws which they wish to have are so totally different from the laws which govern most civilized countries that they denounce the laws, under which they at present live, as foreign. I have studied their views upon the land, with regard to contracts and fair rents, and the whole of that great item of their policy which consists in having rents and other matters fixed by the State, and I say they are opposed to the laws of almost all other States. ["No!"] Hon. Members opposite will, at all events, not deny that besides the national difficulty there is the agrarian difficulty, and besides the agrarian difficulty there are many views with regard to property and contracts which have not yet been accepted generally in other countries. ["No!"] It is untrue, therefore, to say that the whole mischief is due to the foreign garb of the law. It is the substance of the law which is objected to. Then I want to know why the Prime Minister excepts a certain number of contracts from this Bill? My right hon. Friend has placed on record that in the Bill which he proposes a certain number of contracts are to be excepted. I think it is a natural inference that my right hon. Friend thinks contracts presented to the Celtic population of Ireland in a Saxon garb are not quite so likely to be regarded and respected as might be wished, otherwise I fail to see why this clause has been introduced into the Bill. Now, I wish to draw the attention of the House to this point—that in all the analogies which have been drawn, historical analogies and contemporary analogies, you have assumed only the existence of the national sentiment as the cause of trouble; and the influence of the great social and economical difficulties has been overlooked. You cannot overlook these social difficulties. My hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) pointed out the stupendous tasks which would rest on the future Government of the Irish people if they had Home Rule. Stupendous tasks they would be indeed, for the Prime Minister has admitted again and again that the social condition in Ireland is different from that of other countries, and it is different on account of those great difficulties through which we have laboured for many years. A great many hon. Members have said that they would not deal with ancient history; but they generally ended by dealing with it after all. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister spoke of the five centuries during which the union of the countries had not been impaired by the existence of separate Parliaments. Well, those Parliaments were Parliaments of the Colony, Parliaments of the Pale; but they were not, I think the Prime Minister will admit, Parliaments representing the Irish people. As for the Parliaments during the 18th century, up to 1782, I think it may be said that they were entirely controlled by the Crown, and through very forcible measures, and that after they were controlled to a great extent by the most deplorable fraud. I do not know to what extent hon. Members are influenced by either the historical argument, or by the argument of other countries, or by the argument of the Colonies. I do not wish to detain the House by one unnecessary argument;

but I cannot believe there are many Members who think that any analogy can be drawn from the Protestant Parliaments of Ireland, from the Parliament of Grattan, or from any of the Parliaments of the ascendancy time. They cannot be quoted as throwing any light upon the present situation, and no conclusions can be drawn from such an analogy. Then we come to contemporary analogies. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has spoken of Sweden and Norway and Austria-Hungary. I do not know whether it may not be considered that these analogies have already been shown to be totally inapplicable; but if any hon. Members attach any importance to them, I wish them to remember—and it is really one of the cardinal points in this matter, for it affects the whole of this Bill—the difference between other Legislatures and the Parliament of a great Empire such as ours, with a number of subject races placed under our control, with India and the Colonies to govern. I say that our position is totally different in that respect, and that we must consider that difference when we are giving an independent or a semi-independent Parliament to Ireland, especially when we consider its geographical situation. Now, as regards Austria-Hungary. That Empire is bound together by the power of the Crown and by the authority of the three Common Ministers, who are responsible to no Parliament at all. Other differences have been brought forward; but what I contend for is this—that no argument that either of these Unions has been successful can be quoted to us unless you can prove that there is some resemblance in the circumstances of the case. The great difficulty in this proposal which we shall meet at every turn will be this, that British affairs are at the same time Imperial and local, and this applies to us in far greater measure than to the other countries with which analogies have been drawn. Let me ask, again, with regard to the Colonies, can it be said that because we have given the Colonies independence, therefore the same policy is likely to succeed in Ireland—likely to succeed as regards Ireland or as regards the Empire at large—that whole which my right hon. Friend said we must take care not to sacrifice for the prosperity of parts? Remembering that the agrarian difficulty plays some part in this matter, we must take into consideration that in the Colonies there is boundless land, with none of those special difficulties to overcome which have overtaxed our statesmen in the case of Ireland. The new Colony of Ireland—if it is to be a Colony—will find itself confronted with totally different conditions, with totally different difficulties, from any with which our Colonial Empire has had to deal. So far as regards the position of Ireland itself; but as regards England, I wish the House and the country to remember in all the debates on this Bill that our interests, English, Scotch, and Irish, are all interlaced in a manner totally different from what is the case between Britain and her Colonies. Look at the number of Irishmen who come over as labourers, and in many other capacities, to England. Look at the number of English who go to Ireland. Look at the English capital which flows to Ireland. Look at the assistance which is rendered to England's food supplies by Ireland. The interests are so interlaced that separation is impossible. You will not know what are English and what are Irish affairs, and when you come to your finance you will often find it a difficult thing to say whether the income to be taxed is Irish income or English income, and throughout in individual matters, in public matters, in municipal matters, you will not find it so easy to draw this line and to settle what are Irish affairs as you can in the case of the Colonies say what are Colonial affairs. The interests cannot be dissociated, and I wish it to be shown not only that this is a generous offer—not only that this offer is made to the Irish people in the best spirit, but that it is workable—that it will not lead to intolerable friction—friction so intolerable that it might afterwards land us either in civil war or in separation. And now, if I might venture to say a word or two with regard to the Bill itself, I would ask the House to consider, in the first place, the position—to which allusion has so often been made—of the Irish Members of this House. A Local, an Irish National Legislature is to be established in Dublin, and it is proposed in the Bill, or I may say it was proposed, that Irish Members should not sit in this House. The Prime Minister gave us reasons which he correctly stated, in my opinion, to be absolutely conclusive —why it was impossible to allow Irish Members to vote in London upon Imperial affairs. I think that the arguments of my right hon. Friend were absolutely conclusive on that point, and for this reason—that Imperial and local affairs are so inextricably bound up together. You cannot, therefore, have the Irish Members in London partly as Members of this House and partly as non-Members. They cannot be here simply to take part in some of our debates. But if that be so, would it be right and would it be safe to change the Bill in this respect and to admit a portion of the Irish Members to this House to vote upon all possible questions, and, after having given the Irish Members freedom to manage their own affairs, to admit a large contingent of them into this House in order to assist in the management of English and Scotch affairs? The Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) stated yesterday that if the Bill had contained a provision retaining the Irish in this House, it would have been as much opposed as the clause which enacts their removal. I think it is highly probable, and for this reason, that it would be an absolute anomaly, and a point which hon. Members opposite themselves could not and would not claim. They would not claim that they should be here to vote on Irish and Scotch affairs while we had got no voice in the management of Irish affairs. No hostility to Irish Members is involved in this argument; but the difficulty lies in the essence of the case. It is, in fact, a difficulty which will prove to be absolutely insuperable. You cannot treat Ireland differently from England and Scotland without involving yourself in innumerable anomalies and injustices. The only logical conclusion, if you give a National Parliament to Ireland, is to give National Parliaments to England and Scotland as well. You may beat about the bush, and endeavour to devise all kinds of plans, but you will not succeed, because you will be attempting the impossible task of establishing a separate National Government for a portion of that which is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. But as the proposal of restoring some Irish Members to this House is one to which the Government appear to be open, will the House lend me its attention if I point out an argument or two against it, apart from the general anomaly and injustice? There are certain checks put in this Bill, and arrangements made for the protection of minorities. Supposing that after the Bill is passed there should be a contingent of 30 or 40 Irish Members in this House—delegates, perhaps, from their own National Assembly, or elected in some other mode—will they not be as much masters of the situation as arbiters between the English Parties as they are at the present time? [*Cheers and cries of* "No!"] I am glad to hear a cheer from my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because, from the Attorney General's speech yesterday, this appeared to be an open question. Now, I warn hon. Members with regard to this open question. No doubt it is a misfortune that a portion of the Empire should not be represented in this House; but this misfortune is the result of attempting to give a National Parliament to Ireland. It would be most unjust if, in order to meet that difficulty, you were to place English and Scottish affairs at the mercy of a body of Irish Representatives. And remember this point—I do not think it has been often put, and it is one of great importance. Remember the Irish voters in the English constituencies who will still have a considerable amount of power in this country. In this respect, again, mark how different the case of Ireland is from that of the Colonies. What Colony is there which has a large number of its people dwelling amongst us sufficient to determine the fate of political candidates in many constituencies? I am glad to see Irishmen in numbers amongst us if Ireland is to remain an integral portion of the Empire; but I do not wish to see their power increased if they are to be a separate nation planted on our flanks. I say, therefore, that the retention of the Irish Members in this House would appear to me to be fatal to this scheme. With regard to the checks upon the new Parliament, I may say that we know nothing about the two Orders—a point recently very pleasantly and humorously treated by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), to which I observe no answer whatever has been given by any Minister who has spoken. We are in this position, that we only know the general principle of the Bill; but as for the veto and the position in which the different Orders are to stand to each other, we are left still entirely in the dark. As to the two Orders, I wonder how many years would elapse before we should see our old friend the Bill for the reduction of the county franchise again introduced. And, again, the elections are to be made dependent upon rental. But what rent? The judicial rent! We all know the rental in Ireland is in a very precarious position, and to found a second Order upon rental in these days, and under these circumstances, is a device which will not long resist the stress of time. With regard to the veto, I know nothing, and, therefore, can say nothing. I can only ask—Is this Parliament to have any veto at all, or is it not? That is a cardinal point. But we are in the dark with regard to it. I observe that the veto is covered by the words "Prerogatives of the Crown;" but there are Calonies where, if I am not mistaken, the exercise of the veto depends upon Parliamentary law, and Parliament has arranged how the veto shall be exercised. I wish to know in the case before us whether this Parliament is to retain the veto or not? It is essential that we should know that, because, if it is to retain it, we should have this Parliament occupied with Irish affairs in the absence of the Irish Members, and a constant friction kept up which this Bill is introduced to avoid. I will not press the point of veto, because I confess I am entirely at sea with regard to it; we know nothing about it. ["Hear, hear!"] An hon. Member says "Hear, hear!" but ought we to be in that position? What is the view that the Irish Party will take of veto? That is a matter of great importance. There is another point to which perhaps sufficient importance has scarcely been attached, and that is the entire change in the Executive which is to accompany the change in the Legislature. We are asked continually to give Ireland a native Legislature; but it is not only a native Legislature, but a native Executive which is given by this Bill. And what does this involve? It is not a question only between Celt and Saxon, but you are going to change at one blow practically almost every institution in Ireland. You are going to change the Judges, you are going to give power to change the magistrates, and to change the Civil Service from top to bottom. There have been many political and dynastic revolutions; but in very few of these cases, if I except the French Revolution, has there been an entire change of the whole administrative system side by side with an entire change in the whole legislative and political system. What does this mean? You are going to plant Ireland throughout with a totally new and, from the very nature of the case, inexperienced Body in place of the old Judges, magistrates, and Civil Service. It may be right to intrust the whole administration of the Criminal Law to a new Executive and to new Judges; but do not let us disguise from ourselves the momentous character of the change. It is as gigantic a change as ever was made after any revolution which had lasted for years and years. It is not only a political revolution, it is an administrative and social revolution. And mark the position created by the existence of this independent Executive if you have a veto in England, or in the case of the reserved laws which are to remain in the sole competence of the Imperial Parliament. We may make laws on these points, but the execution of those laws will be intrusted to this revolutionized Civil Service. What security shall we have that the decisions of this Parliament will then be executed? Then, again, we are going to be responsible to foreign countries for the conduct of Ireland. That is, if Ireland commits any breach of neutrality or any neglect of International Law by which she inflicts damage on other countries, we shall have the war on our hands, while Ireland will not contribute one penny towards the additional expenses caused by that war. See how the case may work in a special instance. Take the case of the *Alabama*. If the *Alabama* escaped from an Irish port, Great Britain would be responsible to foreign countries; but it would rest with Irish Executive officers in the ports to take securities that the *Alabama* did not escape; we should have no power whatever. We must not shut our eyes to the risk we should run.

Then, again, there is the case of foreign enlistment. What is to prevent Ireland from raising a force for foreign countries with that martial ardour which we know characterizes the Irish? In 1870 it was extremely difficult to restrain Irishmen from taking the part of France, and if there was a great war in which a Roman Catholic country was being pressed, thousands of Irishmen would wish to flock to their standards. On our side, while we should be responsible for the conduct of Ireland, we should be without any power whatever to enforce our will. With regard to outlaws and conspirators, can we be sure, after the connection which has existed between—I will not say the Irish National Leaders, because I wish to say nothing which can cause pain, but between many persons in Ireland and those who have contributed to funds for what they call the emancipation of Ireland — can we be sure that the new Irish Executive will not have a very difficult task to prevent the conspirators, dynamiters, and Nihilists from flocking into Ireland? I say this without wishing to make the slightest charge against any Irish Member; but it is one of the difficulties with which we have to deal—I say it will be a difficult task for those whose movement has succeeded, if it does succeed, through the subscriptions which have come to it from Irish Americans, it will be a difficult task for the new Executive to close the doors in Dublin on their allies from the other side of the water. I trust, if the Bill passes, there will be sufficient power in the Executive in Dublin to deal with this danger. I trust to Heaven it will be so; but it is a danger to which we are perfectly entitled to call the attention of the House and the country. With regard to finance, too, a great deal will depend on the conduct of the new Executive. It will lie with it to assist or hinder the collection of these duties of Customs and Excise, which, while they will be imposed by Great Britain, will be spent, to a large extent, by the Irish Executive. I must confess I am deeply disappointed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave no answer whatever with regard to Customs and Excise. That is a very difficult question. I should like for one moment to call attention to the new Budget of Ireland. That Budget will contain £8,000,000 of Revenue and an Expenditure of £7,900,000. Of that £8,000,000, £6,000,000, or three-quarters, is to be controlled by the Imperial Department. Let me ask this question —Shall we not create an Irish grievance every time that we raise the Duties, if we ever raise the Duties, upon whisky and upon tea? Will that not be regarded as a grievance by the Irish consumers? And if we reduce them, shall we not upset the whole Irish Budget, and so raise a grievance amongst the taxpayers of Ireland? I do not see how this plan can work. It must lead to intolerable dissension; and I think it was the noble Lord the Member for Paddington who pointed out that in this matter it would either hamper the hands of Great Britain in raising taxation, or it would create an intolerable and real grievance in Ireland. I do not know how the difficulty can be overcome. I believe that that will be a difficulty which, like that of the Irish Members, is insoluble, and it is another instance of the difficulty of separation, now that there is so much union as there is between England and Ireland. Here is another point. You are to depend, not only upon the £6,000,000 raised in Ireland under the control of Great Britain, but also upon a certain amount to be raised by way of Income Tax; and here I should like the attention of the Prime Minister, and I should like to have his answer if he can give it this evening. How about the Income Tax raised in England and Ireland? The Income Tax is to be left entirely, as I understand, to the management of the Irish, so far as their portion is concerned. They might reduce the Income Tax—I do not think they would, for reasons which I should like to explain—but they might either raise it above the English level or lower it below the English level. Well, then, of that capital which flows to and fro between England and Ireland—where are the dividends of that capital to be paid? It would be paid and arranged to be paid where the Income Tax is lowest, and then, I think, it would tax the ingenuity of my right hon. Friend, or of any Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the interests are so mixed up as they are between England and Ireland in this matter, to make the necessary separation. Well, with regard to taxation, there is another point on which I wish to ask the view of the Government. I want to know whether the financial situation would not be materially influenced by the exclusion of Ulster from this legislation? I believe that the whole financial equilibrium will break down if Ulster be excluded. I will read to the House some very extraordinary figures bearing upon this point. They are the figures of five years ago; but they hold good practically for the present time. The total return for all Ireland, under Schedule D, was £9,900,000. Excluding Dublin, which was £4,300,000, the total return was £5,600,000. Of course, Dublin is more what we may call national than local, because the income from railways, banks, and many other sources are received and assessed in Dublin. Of the £5,584,000, no less than £2,520,000, or 45 per cent, came from Ulster. But in Ulster itself the contrast between the industrial condition of separate districts—I will call them for the moment the Loyalist and the Nationalist districts—is very striking. Out of the nine counties of Ulster four are predominantly loyal — namely, Antrim, Armagh, Down, and Londonderry. These counties, which returned to Parliament 15 Loyalists and four Parnellites, show a return of £2,220,000 under Schedule D. The remaining five counties—namely, Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Tyrone, which are predominantly Nationalist, and which returned to Parliament 13 Nationalists and only one Loyalist, show a return under Schedule D of only £300,000. [MR. GRAY: Will the right hon. Gentleman exclude Belfast?] Hon. Members can provide themselves with the figures for Belfast. Do they think I am prepared with any possible combination of figures? There is no reason why Belfast should be excluded. Dublin is excluded because it is the Metropolis. I am showing hon. Members where they will get their future taxable Revenue from, and in the Income Tax, Schedule D, Ulster is an extremely important element in the case. [An hon. MEMBER: You include Belfast?] Yes; Belfast is in Ulster, and Belfast will be excluded if Ulster is excluded from the scheme of the Government. I am content if hon. Members doubt my figures; but I am correct when I say Belfast is excluded if Ulster is excluded. [An hon. MEMBER: It is not.] Well, but it is left open for Committee. It is, I think, a monstrous thing that it should be so left open. Anything more startling than the statement that the inclusion of Ulster was not a vital point in the Bill I never heard. The proportion contributed by Loyal Ulster is 88 per cent, and that by Nationalist Ulster is 12 per cent. Having seen these figures, I thought it my duty to present them to the House to show how large a portion of the taxable income of Ireland under Schedule D belongs to loyal Ulster. I also want to know what will be the future of Ulster industries under Home Rule, and what will be the conduct of the Nationalists in relation to those industries? In *The Belfast Morning News*, the paper owned by an hon. Member opposite, I have found some expressions with regard to the industry of Ulster, which seemed to me so extraordinary that they would be worth quoting in this connection. It stated—

> "The linen trade has been a scourge, and not a blessing, to Ulster. But for the linen trade Ulster would never have been rack-rented as it was, and continues to be."

["Hear, hear!"] Those hon. Members who say "Hear, hear!" will attack the linen industry when it is in their power to do so? The article goes on to say—

> "But for the stone of flax, the hank of yarn, the web of linen, the grinding landlord exactions which have kept Ulster poor could not have been put in force. . . . That is the reward Ulster gained by her unswerving blind devotion to linen, loyalty, and landlordism. The trio are incidental—for the linen trade of Ulster is solidly Orange. As an interest, and a powerful interest, it is the worst and most formidable enemy of the Irish people."

That is not an encouraging extract for the future of the linen industry of Ulster, and this shows again the difficulty we have to contend with in Ireland through its connection with America, and also partly through that revolution in all views as regards contracts which have taken place. The article went on—

> "To Northern public opinion the 'linenites' are case-hardened. . . . To Southern and Western public opinion they may be more amenable —more especially if South and West resolve to do for linen what they did for land—if South and West rise up and establish a Flax and Linen League. . . . But, above and beyond all, American public opinion may be relied on as most effective with the unteachable 'linenites.' . . . A casual visitor said that Ulster linen was not Irish, but Orange linen, and that when he went back to America he would preach a cru-

sade over the length and breadth of the States against the use of an article, the sustainment of which and whose widespread vogue were equivalent to the perpetuation of Ulster's slavery and servility."

Such views do not bode much good to the linen industry of Ulster. These are the views of people in the Province, regarding which we do not yet know whether it is to be handed over to be governed by the Dublin Executive or not. I think that this attitude towards the linenites is not one that ought to escape attention. But what will be the future advantage to Ireland of this Home Rule apart from the satisfaction of her national sentiment? Remember what we are going to do. We are not going to cast loose a rich country, but one which, unfortunately, is poor, and cast it off from its richer neighbours. Do you think that when Ireland has obtained that separate Government, with her finances in the position in which they are likely to be, without much trade, that she will be able to afford money for those material developments for which she is so anxious, and which might increase the prosperity of her people? Do hon. Members opposite believe that her credit will be so great as to attract capital to fertilize the country? They may be able to get subscriptions from America for purposes of war; but I think they will want English capital for purposes of peace. Whatever may be the result, I do not think that the war on capital which the hon. Member opposite has sometimes preached will tend to the enrichment of Ireland. Then, again, there is the question of pauperism. Are you going to revolutionize your principles in regard to pauperism as you will probably revolutionize other great administrative experiments? I see great danger to the prosperity of Ireland in these directions. I hope that hon. Gentlemen opposite will not say that these are the words of one who is an enemy of Ireland. [*Home Rule cheers.*] Those cheers are not equitable—they are not fair. I hope that hon. Members opposite do not believe that those who are opposed to this Bill are the enemies of Ireland. That would not be fair. There are many of us who have done our best in past days to assist Irish legislation. [*Ironical laughter.*] Yes; before most of the hon. Members who are jeering sat in this House—in 1869, at the time of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, at the time of the foundation of the National University of Ireland, and when some Liberals opposed those measures who are now prepared to make a complete assignment of the whole education of Ireland to Dr. Walsh. Are Irish Members not prepared then to hand over the management of education to the Roman Catholic Bishops, who would be the majority in the Irish Parliament? [Mr. W. O'Brien: Certainly not.] Well, Liberal Members are prepared who support this Bill. ["No, no!"] There is nothing whatever in the Bill to prevent it.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby): How do you know that?

Mr. GOSCHEN: I will tell my right hon. Friend how I know it; because it is the desire and opinion of the Prime Minister that Irishmen should manage their own affairs, and if there is anything which I would wish to manage for myself it would be the education of my children. The right hon. Gentleman could not carry his Bill if he put a clause into it which would hamper the Irish Parliament in dealing with education. I say this in no spirit of hostility, for I have contended, and I am prepared to contend now, that greater power ought to be given to Ireland to deal with education than she at present possesses. This is one of the inconsistencies of some hon. Members that they should now be prepared to hand over the whole management of Irish affairs to an Irish Parliament after struggling, and I think struggling a great deal too much, against giving her more power in regard to education. I trust that we shall not be called the enemies of Ireland because we stand by the Loyalists of Ireland. I do not know whether it is right that we should speak of the abandonment of the Loyalists; but it seems to me to be something very like it. There have been cases of countries who, after the humiliation of defeat, have seen torn from their side subjects who had relied on them for support; but that has always been after a disastrous defeat in the field. But for a nation in the plenitude of its power to hand over men who have relied on its honour and its power is what has never before been recorded in the annals of history. If it is done it will be done by this country for the first time. We have been told to-night by the Chancellor of the

Exchequer that we should look at the opinion of foreign countries on this matter. The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) last night said—"Have you thought of the effect of the refusal of this measure on English-speaking communities abroad?" Yes; I have thought of it. And I have also thought of the effect of surrender upon all parts of the Empire. I have thought what would be the result if, in obedience to 86 Members, or in obedience to the Irish Americans, or in obedience to our Parliamentary incapacity, we yielded an Irish Parliament. I have thought what would be the result, and I know what would be the result. The result would be that every subject race, that India, that Europe, would know that we were no longer able to cope with resistance, if resistance were offered. If this Irish Parliament were granted on the speech of the Prime Minister that would be a different thing. He rested it on the "foreign garb" argument, and the foreign garb argument alone; but the other Ministers who have spoken have told us and warned us of the fearful consequences that would ensue upon a refusal. What is that but a confession of impotence—that we are now driven to bay, and we surrender? My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland reminded me the other night of my opposition to the county franchise; but why he should attempt to answer an hon. Member who had not yet spoken, rather than those who had, was somewhat remarkable. But the Prime Minister, speaking with regard to what he, for brevity, called coercion, said that the history of the last few years in regard to coercion was a history of vacillation; and that with regard to the future, if we were an autocracy, then possibly we might be able to deal with this question by effective coercion, but that it was not possible in a democracy. I want to know, is this not a charge against the democracy which we have enfranchised? Will they be less capable of dealing with emergencies of this kind? Are we to tell the new recruits, the new voters, that there is no other alternative but capitulation?—because there is no other word for it. That does not seem to me to be one of the best modes of summoning them to their new duties. The Attorney General last night said that, at all events, the constituencies had given no mandate for coercion. Is it necessary for the country to give a mandate to an Executive Government that it shall maintain the law? When you speak of coercion you mean the repression of crime. At this moment, when we are asked to give a National Parliament to Ireland, we are told that if we do not there will be a great outbreak of crime; if that be so, does that show a state of things in Ireland which enables you to proceed with that steady legislation, and those gradual reforms that may be demanded? We are asked for alternatives. It would be a good Parliamentary answer, though it is not one that I am about to make; but we might say—"We do not yet know what is your plan; we only know part of it." [Mr. W. E. Gladstone: Hear, hear!] I do not quite understand why the Prime Minister says "Hear, hear!" But though we do not know the exact plan of the Government, I condemn the principle of a separate National Parliament in Ireland on the ground which I have placed before the House, irrespective of any other measure that can possibly be introduced. The dangers with regard to municipal action, the distress of the finances, and the intolerable friction and danger, the evil result of surrender, all condemn the enterprize. These are circumstances which are sufficient in themselves to condemn this Bill, whether the Government proceed with their Land Bill or not. We know this plan. If we only knew half of it, we should know that it was a plan for separating England and Ireland, and practically for repealing the Union. Therefore, the interruption of the Prime Minister was not to the point, that I had spoken without knowing his plan. [Mr. W. E. Gladstone: I did not say a word as to that.] My right hon. Friend said "Hear, hear!" in a manner that, I think, justified me in interpreting his meaning in that sense. I am sorry I should have been betrayed into any warmth on this matter; but when challenged to produce our plans, I say it would be a fair answer to reply that we do not yet know the Government plan. But I will not make it. Before I refer to alternative plans, however, I should like to know under what circumstances will that plan be produced? Will the Irish Members in this House follow any Constitutional course? Will the state of Ireland be such that it will be possible to propose any measures for any species of reformed government? Before knowing that, it is extremely difficult to say what the alternative is. Do hon. Members think that one can begin to recast the Constitution while the soil is quivering with revolution? Do hon. Members think we can begin to recast the Constitution when we are threatened with all these tremendous consequences? [An Irish MEMBER: We have not used threats.] I will apologize if hon. Members have made no threats, and I will say that the threats and terrorizing have mainly been confined to the Treasury Bench. I accept with pleasure the declaration of hon. Members opposite, and I only hope that the declaration is prospective as well as historical; that it is not only that they have made no threats, but that they will make no threats; and that we may dismiss as mere arguments put forward to endeavour to put pressure upon us those fearful consequences which have been predicted by the Chief Secretary for Ireland. I confess that he spoke as if he meant them. He did not give me the impression of a man who was using arguments merely to induce us to vote. I thought he was profoundly impressed with the danger of refusing this measure, not only on account of discontent, but of crime and an outburst of outrage in the country such as has not been witnessed before. Such has been the talk. I am glad that it has been disavowed. I am glad to think that we can proceed fairly, and that we need not think, and that the country will no more be told, when Irish Members are not present that we must look forward to such convulsions as have seldom been seen in the history of the country. If we should be able to approach this matter and these problems in a spirit of peace, then I do not see why alternative schemes should not be proposed. But one cardinal point which ought to lie at the basis of these schemes is that they should be applicable to Ireland, Scotland, and England. Remedial legislation is always spoken of. Does that remedial legislation mean that we are to grant Home Rule? What is meant by remedial legislation? If it means that we are to go further than the Land Act, I confess I believe that the Land Act has landed Ireland in such a difficulty, that the knot has been tied in such an inextricable way, that it may be necessary to take remedial measures to relieve an intolerable situation. But what are the other remedial measures? I do not call Home Rule a remedial measure. I should call remedial measures increasing that which the Attorney General calls parochial—increasing the powers of local government in Ireland on a large and not a parochial scale. But it appears to me that that which hon. Members from Ireland chiefly desire—namely, the establishment of a central political Body in Dublin—and I commend this to my hon. Friends around me—will sap the foundation of local life in Ireland, because it will be overruled by this central political Body. For all local reformers know that it is from the centre that comes all the influence that prevents the development of local life. I would far sooner build up in Ireland throughout the localities local and Municipal Bodies than, in the first place, have a Central Body which must be political from the very circumstances of the case. In that direction and in the direction of the land much requires to be done; and, for my part, I say that if we can go further and place education on a footing more satisfactory to the Irish people, I would wish that very much also. But it may be said, I know, that these are not heroic measures. We have had heroic legislation, as it was called; but it appears to me to have been legislation not of heroism, but of fear. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister spoke of the constant vacillation that had taken place in the management of Irish affairs. What is wanted in the management of Irish affairs is clearly that this vacillation should cease, and that there should be some belief that England sometimes pronounces a last word. We have constantly been impatient. We have passed the Land Act, and two years afterwards it has had to be amended, and it has been amended upon pressure. We have passed the Land Purchase Act, and why does it not succeed? Because no time has been given to it; and we are again called upon to interfere. If this goes on, of course it is impossible to hope for anything, except that the Irish will demand more and more; and how, then, can we think that this would be a final settlement? We shall give way now, as we have given way before, and check after check will vanish, until the Irish have done that which they desire to do—established Ireland as a separate nation. That is their desire; and if the Irish people find that it is possible for England to be firm, firmness is called coercion. It is considered something fearful to coerce evil-doers. They say—What remedy have you but a policy of repression? But there will be no repression unless there is crime. Therefore, I say I will not foresee this crime, and I will not believe that it would be necessary at once to pass an Act of repression. We were told by my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), in impressive language last night, that we were to look to the example and to the opinion of America. The United States had their difficulties 20 years ago. All Europe advised the North that it could not manage its difficulty with the South. That was the opinion of Europe, as it is said that now the opinion of America is against us. The Northerners did not listen to the advice that was tendered to them either by Europe or England; and it was fortunate for themselves that they did not. They thought that it was better not to listen to the voice of Europe upon that occasion; and if they had listened to it there would have been two nations on the Continent of America instead of one. So now, if we were to listen to the voice of America—and it is a voice that is not unanimous, for I know there are Americans of eminence who think it would be madness for us to grant this measure—if we were to listen to that voice, if we do not take care we shall see there will be two nations instead of one here. I prefer the description, though it is in stronger words than I would use myself, given by one of the foremost Liberal statesmen of his day, the maker of Italy, Count Cavour, who, speaking on the Repeal, said that the disruption of the bond which ties the British Islands together would be a hateful and a criminal enterprize. We have heard of responsibility. The responsibility of rejecting this Bill has often been put before us. With those who follow the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister on this occasion will lie the responsibility of weakening the bonds which tie the British Islands together; and with us, who resist it, lie the responsibility on our side. We shall not shrink from that responsibility. Those who vote with my right hon. Friend will show that they have no confidence in the capacity of the English people to deal with a great danger; that they believe there is no longer sufficient patriotism left to sink Party in this matter, and to endeavour to approach together the solution of this difficulty. But those who resist this Bill will do so in the belief that we have our duty to perform to the whole of this Empire; that if we give way now we shall be loosening the confidence of all those who look up to us, and who trust to our honour and our might; and, holding these views, I trust that all who hold them will close up their ranks, and, shoulder to shoulder, will resist this Bill to the last.

Mr. ARCH (Norfolk, N.W.) said, that the fears that had been expressed that something fearful would happen unless justice were done to the Sister Country were to him a great surprise. If the English Parliament with the English Government was afraid to do justice to any portion of its subjects, then he declared it was not worthy of the confidence of the people. Where did the danger lie? The greatest danger lay in withholding justice, not in giving it. It had been his lot to work with men from Ireland, and he had always found them as genial, as honest, and as law-abiding as himself and those others with whom he worked. It was said that great danger would follow the passing of the Bill; but then had there not been given great cause for danger when the senses and the rights of the people had been trampled upon, and their feelings outraged, and their rights completely buried? In some instances crime might have sprung from the love of crime; but he believed in the wise policy laid down by one of their great writers—"Remove the cause and the effect will cease"—and he was prepared, as the spokesman of thousands of hard-working men in this country, to challenge any Conservative Member, or any Gentleman on the Liberal side of the House, that if he travelled through the rural districts with him, and asked the working men of the counties how they would like Ireland treated, whether with repression, coercion, or with justice, he ventured to forfeit his existence if he did not carry 90 per cent of those men on the lines of justice. The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) last night asked the question why bankers and landlords did not sit in the House to represent the Irish people? The question was easily answered. The Irish people had no confidence in them. The Conservatives might ask him why it was that so many Liberals were returned from the counties at the last Election? He would tell them that it was simply because the labourers had no confidence in the Tories. He had made up his mind on this question, and although some of the Liberal Representatives of the county divisions might feel a little timidity, he had no fear. Should Gentlemen like the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down kill this Bill, and there should be an appeal to the constituencies, he would record his vote in favour of the Bill, and would then go back to his constituents and tell them why he had done so. And he did not doubt that they would show their high satisfaction with what he had done by again returning him to that House. They might rest assured that with the increasing intelligence of this country, and with the enfranchisement of the people, that justice would be done. Five years ago he could not have been found there pleading for justice for Ireland, and why? Because at that time the working men of the counties had not had justice conceded to them by that extension of the franchise which, thanks to the Premier and to the Liberal Party, they had now obtained. He was there, and he believed a host of others were there, to do what was just and right and fair for Ireland, and having done that they would not be afraid to meet their constituents.

Mr. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.) said, that if he had consulted his personal feelings he would have been content to give a silent vote; but he felt bound, as far as he could, to give effect to the voice of the loyal minority on a question so gravely affecting its interests and the future of Ireland. Five months ago, before the opinion of the enlarged constituencies had been elicited, not a single statesman of any authority had expressed himself in such a manner as to lead to the idea that the unbroken consensus of opinion of Ministers of either Party in the State would be departed from on this question. But the Prime Minister had become a convert to Home Rule in spite of his strongly expressed previous opinions, not by any means for the first time in his long, brilliant, but by no means consistent career. All the representative men of both Parties, and those who were likely to become representative men, had spoken of this measure as tending to the disintegration of the Empire. In his speech the other night the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister had spoken of the term dismemberment of the Empire as a misnomer; but it was a term which had frequently been used by the right hon. Gentleman himself, as when he had spoken of the hon. Member for Cork and his Colleagues as "marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire." The right hon. Gentleman occasionally forgot the previous expressions of his opinion. In early political life the right hon. Gentleman had written a book upon the union between Church and State; but he had introduced a policy right in the face of the opinions expressed in that book. The Irish Church had been sacrificed to a sentiment; its Disestablishment had been a concession to the claims of race, and it was the natural result of the policy of Disendowment and Disestablishment that they were brought face to face with the disastrous and destructive scheme which now confronted them. That policy had destroyed the influence of an enlightened and sympathetic clergy, and left the easily excited peasantry to become the prey of political incendiaries; and it was in the hate of these misguided masses to what they were taught to believe was Saxon tyranny that the formidable power of the hon. Member for Cork solely rested. But the worst of all was that it had led to the vicious doctrine that Imperial matters were to be subservient to the conflicting claims of nationality. The Prime Minister had said, when introducing his Franchise Act, that it was his purpose to have a uniform law for a united Empire. If the right hon. Gentleman had adopted that maxim a little earlier the Bill for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church would never have been introduced, nor the Irish Land Act. They had since had the Crofters Bill and other legislation, the principles of which had been largely drawn from Irish sources. The recognition of the separable claims of race had been the most fatal blunder of modern legislation, and if persisted in would lead to the dismemberment of the Empire. Why should not Wales and Scotland advance similar claims, and ask for separate Parliaments in Edinburgh and Carnarvon? Was it because the latter had not associated their demands with hideous agrarian outrages, or superseded the Queen's law and the exercise of every social right and liberty by the persecutions of "Boycotting," the ghastly appeal to infernal machines, assassinations, and dynamite explosives? Looking to the fact that both Scotland and the Principality of Wales were thoroughly loyal, after conceding the claims of Ireland to be considered upon a separate footing from the rest of the Kingdom, was he to suppose that the right hon. Gentleman or the Party which he led would care to refuse to a loyal and orderly population a concession of this kind, when he had lowered his flag before the advancing forces of anarchy and revolution? Had the right hon. Gentleman forgotten the charge brought by the illustrious statesman whose remains rested for too short a time in the great minster of our glorious dead? Had he forgotten that in that short career of exceptional peril, which was equally distinguished by the inscrutable Providence that shielded it, that statesman saw and fathomed the terrible nature of that conspiracy from which Ireland and the Empire had suffered so long? Had he forgotten the grave and tremendous impeachment tabled by him against the hon. Member for Cork and his coadjutors—"that they either connived at outrages and murders, or that when warned by facts they determined to remain in ignorance"—and yet by those charged with this grave accusation by a great, honest, and deservedly respected Leader of the Liberal Party the only reply that was made was the scurrility and abuse freely flung at the noble life that had escaped the bullet of the assassin. And yet to such as these the right hon. Gentleman wished to relegate the management of Irish affairs. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to be alone accessible to the mere argument of brute numbers, and the influence of that argument was not weakened because it was stained with crime. The Prime Minister had appealed to the case of Norway and Sweden, and Austria and Hungary; but the circumstances were not paralel. In those countries there were the elements of order, industry, and enterprize, wealth, intelligence, and loyalty. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to pay some consideration to the views of the really responsible and influential Bodies of the Irish people. The Presbyterian Church, representing over 500,000 persons, and the Episcopal Church, with its 600,000 followers, and the Methodist Body, representing 60,000 persons, making a total of 1,250,000 of Irish Protestants, had, in spite of their various religious opinions, found a common ground for agreement and protest against this scheme. In fact, every Religious Body but the one which was governed by the Vatican's decrees had protested against it. Moreover, every Judge of eminence had declared how intolerable the lawless and seditious conspiracy was to which this claim was conceded. The Grand Juries, representing the administrative element, and, properly, the Chambers of Commerce, respresenting the trade and enterprize of the country, and, more than that, the great political Party, which one might assume from the reasoning of the right hon. Gentleman had no political existence—for it had no representation in Parliament—yet it comprised at least 500,000 of the Irish people—had declared against it. The noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale knew how intelligent and loyal in their convictions they were to the principles of the Liberal Party, as he visited Belfast some months since, where, after his noble and patriotic and convincing speech the other night, he (Mr. De Cobain) assured him he would receive a hundredfold more enthusiastic welcome if he favoured their great Northern Metropolis with a visit again, and yet all these expressions of opinion appeared to have gone for nothing. The elements of order and stability were not those which had the power of convincing the right hon. Gentleman; their firm and intelligent remonstrance were as nothing compared with the cry of those who were accustomed to rejoice at the seeming success of Britain's enemies, who cheered the Mahdi, welcomed Russian encroachment, refused to exhibit their municipal emblems in honour of the visit of the Heir to the Throne, and received the National Anthem and the sentiment of the Queen with an attitude of envenomed disloyalty, and a spirit which was not inaptly described by a

Member of the present Government in a previous Parliament as "steeped to the lips in treason." Did the Prime Minister imagine that the Irish Party wanted an Irish Parliament as a mere concession to sentiment; that they would be satisfied with the empty boast that they were a self-governed people; and that with an independent Parliament they would suddenly become pacific and friendly; that their hatred to all other classes would at once die out with the expropriation of the landlords; and that no indemnity would be passed for rebels and assassins? Did he think that criminal conspiracies and "Boycotting" would cease, and that the National League, having obtained these concessions, would not make fresh attacks upon property in towns and other rights of owners; that the cowardly outrages upon defenceless women and unresisting animals would not go on until the race of truer Irishmen, who had furnished that splendid example of courage, industry, and capacity would be driven to seek a new asylum for the exercise of their faith and freedom? He warned the right hon. Gentleman that, by the policy in which he had embarked, he had risked not only the loss of his constituency, but of his great political character, and that of the Party of which he had been for so long the distinguished and successful Leader. To use the happy figure furnished by his Colleague the Chief Secretary for Ireland, he had been sailing on the insidious current which imperceptibly but swiftly carried him nearer to the rapids which lay before. One after another the strong arms which guided the barque of statecraft had been withdrawn. The right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland, to whose grave and dignified explanation the House listened with such pleasure the other evening; the brilliant and capable Gentleman who was the chosen Representative of Young England, and whose splendid speech appealed with such eloquence and force to the Loyalists who represented Ulster in that House; the noble Marquess, whose recent visit evoked such sympathy among the citizens of the loyal town he (Mr. De Cobain) had the honour to represent—all were gone, and many others as well, and the barque freighted with the fate and fortunes of the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues was nearing the unknown and fateful chasm. Let him pass this measure, and he would find how wild and unfortunate was the step he had taken. The sympathy of those whose attitude was disloyal and whose claims were destructive would be but a poor consolation for the fact that in his unreflecting haste the right hon. Gentleman, with the fate and fortunes of his Party, was hopelessly engulfed in dark waters below. They were reminded in what was meant to be a great defence of the Ministerial policy the other night of what was strangely termed "contingent sedition in Ulster." The force of the argument went to show that those who offered resistance to the enforcement of any measure, however rash and revolutionary, were guilty of sedition. By parity of reasoning, if a majority of Deputies had been returned by the Arrondissements in sympathy with the Commune, Paris should have been abandoned to pillage, and France handed over to the domination of a mob; or if the followers of those who a short time back visited Regent Street and other parts of the Metropolis, in the fury of an excited attack upon property and person, could but command a majority of sympathizers in this House, the British Empire should become the prey and sport of Socialist conspiracy, and the free institutions of a great people should be abandoned to the remorseless sweep of a revolutionary wave. He opposed the policy of this measure, because it put a premium upon lawless agitation and made concessions to crime. He opposed it because it established precedents which, if followed up, must lead to disintegration and decay. He opposed it because it said to those who kept the law, "You must suffer;" but to those who broke it with defiance, "Ask and you shall receive." He opposed it because he considered it to be an outrage upon humanity, an abnegation and wanton abandonment of the most sacred obligations of Government, and because it inflicted an indelible stain and blemish upon the fame of a great and ancient Empire.

Mr. EDWARD RUSSELL (Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, the remedial measure which the hon. Member who had just sat down (Mr. De Cobain) seemed to take most interest in was a measure to put down anarchy and sedition; but both the hon. Member and the hon. and gallant Member who spoke on Monday night (Major Saunderson) made a great mistake on that point. If this Bill was carried there would be no prospect of their putting down anarchy and sedition; because the only prospect of anarchy and sedition which was likely to arise would be their own revolt against what would then be the Constitution of their country. The hon. Member made a distinct protest against the exceptional land legislation which had been adopted for Ireland; but he must know that that exceptional legislation had had the effect of giving other parts of Ireland the advantage of that system of tenant right which for generations had been the pride and glory and the secret of the prosperity of Ulster. He (Mr. Russell) was desirous to say that he, for one, went heart and soul for the measure which was now before the House. It had been urged in several quarters that there had been a remarkable silence below the Gangway on that side, and when such speeches were delivered, as on Monday night were made with remarkable potency by the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) and others, it had been said that those speeches were tardy. That was a very modest quarter of the House. That part of the House had a great respect for distinguished Parliamentary reputations; it had a great respect for those who had to establish and make clear their position before the country; and he believed there were several hon. Members of the House who they felt had very great need to effect that operation; but he ventured to say there was something which was even more conspicuous than any speech could be, and that was the silence—the favourable silence—of many hon. Members upon points on which they looked with regret. It was a hard matter for Gentlemen sitting near him to go for a measure which introduced into a part of these Kingdoms most undemocratic provisions. The Legislature of the new Irish Constitution, it had been said, would be the most Conservative Assembly in Europe. That was a prospect which they could not be expected to regard with much satisfaction. But their business was to take a generous view of the susceptibilities and wishes and aspirations of hon. Gentlemen from Ireland. If those Gentlemen were prepared to work their Constitution upon comparatively Conservative principles—as they protested they were—Radicals were prepared to hand it over to them; and were all the more ready to do so, because, on those very lines, the Constitution ought to have a better chance with hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway opposite and with Members of the old Whig Party. As to the exclusion of the Irish Members, he had heard with very great satisfaction the observations which were made on Monday night by his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General. He thought they were in an excellent spirit. There were undoubtedly many Members of the Liberal Party who felt considerable difficulty in agreeing to the removal of the Irish Members from the House. His hon. and learned Friend gained an easy victory over many of those who had opposed this. He said very justly that their affection for the Irish Members was new-born and spurious. The affection, on the other hand, which many hon. Members in that part of the House cherished for the Representatives of nationality and patriotism was not new-born but consistent. However, if it should be stated by the Head of the Government that it still passed the wit of man to introduce a system whereby they could combine the Imperial representation of Ireland in that House with local self-government, he, for one, should not think of wrecking the Bill on such a point. The feeling he had towards this business had been best expressed in a passage—one of the finest passages—in the noble speech of the Premier in introducing this Bill, when he said he trusted it was not the less of two evils that he was proposing, but that he was proposing a measure that was thoroughly good in itself. That doctrine was commended to them by every Liberal principle; and he felt that it was one of the greatest shocks that any of them had experienced in the course of political life to find the principle suddenly rejected, especially by his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), to whom they had looked up for some time past as a great Leader of their Party, and one probably who would take a great share in the shaping of its future destinies. He (Mr. Russell) confessed himself utterly unable to imagine the process of reasoning by which his right hon. Friend had departed—he would not say from his own previous expressions—but from doctrines which had, undoubtedly under his authority and with his influence, been distributed in the constituencies. He ventured to say that if, before the curious events of last November, *The Radical Programme* had been denounced by the opposite side on this point, the right hon. Gentleman would not have shrunk from its defence. What had led to the extraordinary change in the tone of some right hon. Gentlemen, and especially his right hon. Friend (Mr. Chamberlain) upon this subject? His right hon. Friend had abandoned the arrangements which he formerly proposed for the local government of Ireland. He was very indignant last year that those arrangements were rejected by certain Members of the Cabinet. He, no doubt, considered that their rejection of them was a mark of backwardness and reaction on their part. He (Mr. Russell) thought they were entitled to say that they held more statesmanlike views. He believed it was admitted by hon. Gentlemen from Ireland that it would not be safe, from an English point of view, to give very strong local government throughout the country, unless they pacified, and satisfied, and appeased the sense of wrong, the sense of injustice, the sense of disunion, and the sense of distrust which had hitherto existed. What hon. Members had to be convinced of was that the union of the Empire was sufficiently protected. His right hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen), who said that night that they were going for separation, had several times in the course of his speech rather juggled or trifled with words. They proposed this because it would make for union, not because it would produce disunion. Again, his right hon. Friend spoke of coercion as if there was no distinction between one mode of bringing the law to bear upon evil-doers and another. But coercion meant not merely the repression of evil-doers—it meant the repression of evil-doers by means which civilized countries constitutionally abandoned, and which they only brought in as a last resort. That was the sort of coercion which was objected to. He thought still more that his right hon. Friend confused language in a most extraordinary manner, and in a manner conveying a great personal slight, when he made his distinction between courage and timidity, and when he chose to take courage to himself, forsooth, and those who held his views, and alleged that it was timidity which actuated others. If there was anything like heroism in politics, if there was heroism in the framing of measures and in taking the responsibility of them, that heroism had been shown by the Premier, and, he believed, would be shown by him to the end. Referring for a moment to an incidental point, he observed that the House was not a little impressed by the comments which his right hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh made upon certain observations which had appeared in an Ulster newspaper on "Linen, Loyalty, and Landlordism." It was rather new to interpose, as a reason for taking this or that course on a great Constitutional question like this, the observations of newspapers on such a disputed and disputable point; but one great reason why the Ministry of the Liberal Party introduced this measure, and hoped to carry it, was that they wished to get rid of the spirit in which such articles as those quoted were written. Their Irish fellow-subjects had a command of language and a literary facility which they could not boast. Sometimes, under the influence of political heat, they allowed those powers of theirs to run away with them into extravagance. When they were weighted with self-governing responsibilities, a great and salutary change might be hoped for. The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), in a speech of remarkable power and wisdom, made a sketch of a most interesting kind of the probable future duties of the Government which was about to be established. He thought the best tribute to the accuracy of that forecast and the most encouraging circumstance in this whole business was that there was scarcely a word in what the hon. Member for Bedford had said that he (Mr. Russell) had not heard over and over again from Irish Members when, in casual conversation in the Lobby, they had been discussing their future Government. It was significant that they had only made two serious points of objection. They had raised a difficulty as to the money contribution, and they had raised a doubt as to the arrangements in case of conflict between the two Orders. These were both points—and especially the fiscal point—which would not be raised by hon. Gentlemen opposite if they were not intending to work the Constitution honestly. He expressed his very deep sorrow that the policy now proposed, and which he believed a large proportion of the Liberal Party had long been desiring, was confronted with difficulties in the ranks of that Party. His right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham objected very strongly to inquiry by one man. He (Mr. Russell) was indifferent who made the inquiry, so that the inquiry was a sound one, so that the intention was honest and the mind competent which made the inquiry. His right hon. Friend seemed, in some strange way, to resent the colossal intelligence of the Premier. They looked round in vain among the statesmen of the day for any mind so great, or any intellect so fair and just. When they had those qualities in combination, it seemed to him that, whether the result came from one mind or from more, they should welcome it, although it was utterly unfair to say that the Cabinet had not been acquainted with the general principles of the measure, because they were perfectly certain that the right hon. Gentleman did submit to his Colleagues the results of his personal inquiry, and they knew also that, on discussion, some of those points were modified. It had been shown, *ad nauseam* in the debate, how utterly unworthy were some of the counter propositions. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington), to whom they all looked with such respect, and who made such a remarkable and courageous speech the other night, proposed the alternative of coercion, *plus* the perpetual exclusion of the Tories from Office. He (Mr. Russell) should scarcely think that was a platform upon which the noble Marquess could obtain the concurrence of the Tories, even upon the stage of Her Majesty's Theatre. He believed the true ideal was found in the speech of the hon. Member for Bedford, the great-grandson of a great friend of Ireland, the great-grandson of a great Whig, the inheritor of the noble principles of one of the noblest Parties that ever existed in any country—a Party that was more maligned by the inconsistencies of its own degenerate descendants than it could possibly be by the declamation of opponents opposite, or by the grudging recognition that its merits sometimes received from Radical Members. If he (Mr. Russell) were a mere controversialist in this matter of Home Rule he should fear nothing; because he should be certain that the doctrine of self-government for Ireland would very shortly be carried into effect. They all knew that it must come. His right hon. Friend (Mr. Goschen) seemed to have an admiration for that spurious sort of courage which consisted in rushing full tilt upon insurmountable obstacles and unconquerable adversaries. Statesmanship should take into account everything that was likely to affect the future; and nothing could more affect the future of this question than the probabilities of disaster and misery which he believed were almost certain to come if this Bill was rejected. But was the fear of seeming afraid any reason why Liberals should stand back from the enterprize in which the Premier had engaged? On the contrary, it was a principle of Liberal policy that, wherever extraordinary outrages and evils and atrocities existed in a country, there lay underneath them, as their origin and cause, social and political evils which ought to be removed; and when he was told that all these evils and terrible occurrences would come if they did not keep up the fetish of a discredited Union, and a system which had produced every ill which diabolical ingenuity could produce, he did not welcome them, or suggest them, or advise them, or wish for them—God forbid that—but he should expect them as the necessary consequence of political evil; and he considered there was no political evil much worse than shutting their eyes to what was immediately before them, and going blind for a principle which it was high time to abandon. If he were, then, a mere controversialist on this subject, he should not fear the result of what they might look for; but he feared many things which were likely to attend the protracted discussion of this question if a settlement of it could not be arrived at, especially among the Members of the Liberal Party. He was sensible of the irony of the situation, when his right hon. Friend, who usually sat where he was now standing, was found lagging behind upon this one question, which was the question of the time. He asked himself how the ordinary Business of Liberal politics was to be transacted under such circumstances, if his right hon. Friend was to occupy anything like the position he had hitherto taken? His right hon. Friend (Mr. Chamberlain) had not been half-an-hour on that Bench before he voted with the Radicals on the Crofters Bill, upon a question going to the basis of Land Reform, and they were glad to welcome him, because he was free; but what had they to say when they advanced to the graver difficulties of the political situation, which must demand from everyone on that side the utmost exertion of all their talents, and found that his right hon. Friend was to desert them, and that in any combination of Parties they must be deprived of his assistance, with Heaven knew what results of cleavage and disorder and disaster? The first time he ever heard the voice of the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government was in the year 1851, when he was resisting, with all the force of his eloquence, the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, afterwards acknowledged to be an opprobrium of our legislation; and he remembered very well the peroration of that speech, in which the right hon. Gentleman said that he, for one, would follow the bright star of justice beaming from the heavens, whithersoever it might lead him. He (Mr. Russell) thought, as a lad, that he had never heard such music. The right hon. Gentleman had been true to that star; and they had believed, till now, that his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham had his eyes as truly fixed upon it. If it was to be otherwise, even in an exceptional instance—if his right hon. Friend was going to make the loadstar of his policy in this case an evil or misleading one, or if he was going to close his eyes as he steered his barque, and to make the key of his policy distrust and despair in reference to the Irish nation, then he (Mr. Russell) prayed Heaven that the right hon. Gentleman might not be allowed to run their ship upon the rocks.

LORD ERNEST HAMILTON (Tyrone, N.) said, it would be presumption on his part to attempt to go into the details of the Bill; but there were some points which seemed to him, as an Irishman, to be of peculiar, if not considerable, importance. On the Bill, generally, he had no criticisms or objections to offer; but he would say that, while it possibly might work admirably in the cases quoted to them of Norway or of Hungary, if they applied it to Ireland he would venture to predict for it a most speedy and disastrous failure. When the Prime Minister pointed to Hungary as a precedent for the proposal, he (Lord Ernest Hamilton) doubted whether he was serious, for he contended there was no analogy between the cases of Hungary and Ireland. In Hungary there was a genuine national movement. There they saw the noble and the peasant, the Roman Catholic priest and the Protestant clergyman marching side by side in the ranks of the national army, and demanding that those just rights of theirs which were denied should be granted to them; but in the case of Ireland they saw it was composed, as regarded the people, exclusively of one class, and almost entirely of one religion, not struggling to maintain their just rights, but to possess themselves of the property of another class, and actuated by undying hatred of that class, because it happened to be largely composed of persons of English and Scotch descent. He thought even the most sanguine supporters and admirers of the Prime Minister, or even that right hon. Gentleman himself, could hardly expect that the Bill would permanently satisfy the Irish. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), it was true, had been graciously pleased to say he would accept the Bill for what it was worth. No doubt he would have accepted any Bill the Prime Minister brought forward; but he (Lord Ernest Hamilton) had noticed that the cheers of hon. Members below the Gangway—his supporters—were scarcely so long or so loud when the Prime Minister sat down as when he rose; indeed, when the right Gentleman was describing some of the chief principles of his Bill there was a dead silence in that usually noisy quarter of the House. The hon. Member for the City of Cork would accept the Bill, because he knew that by so doing his name would be handed down to posterity as that of the man who obtained national independence for Ireland, and because he knew that what England had given as a free gift she would never be able to withdraw, and that the same means which had made the English Government give so much would, in the future, if applied, coerce that Government into giving still more. He (Lord Ernest Hamilton) knew the character of the Irish people. [*Laughter.*] At all events, he knew the character of those who justly called themselves the majority of that people; and anyone who had that personal knowledge, with the exception of those he did not wish or expect to agree with him, knew that the Irish character was devoid of all sense of gratitude, and that it was also devoid of that fine delicacy of feeling which usually prevented the recipients of some great boon, for which they had asked on the one day, from immediately clamouring for some other gift on the next day. ["Oh, oh!"] Yes; for what was more common in Ireland than this illogical argument—"Sure yer honour will not refuse what I ask, because ye gave me what I wanted last year?" The Bill, if passed, would not permanently satisfy hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, because their demand was not so much for an independent Parliament as for an ultimate and absolute repeal of the Union. It might, however, at the outside, satisfy them for two years. Before the Prime Minister sat down it must have occurred to many hon. Members that the scheme contained all the elements for future agitation. The proposed fiscal and financial arrangements, as concerned the relations of the two countries, were such as to leave Ireland, even on the showing of the Prime Minister himself, in a far worse position than she was in at that present moment; and it could easily be understood how the complicated financial arrangements between the two countries would be distorted by each hon. Member below the Gangway, and made fresh cause of grievance against the oppression and extortion of hated English interference. ["Oh, oh!"] No one could for a moment imagine that the Bill would extinguish the undying, uncalculating, and irreconcilable hatred which existed in Ireland towards England. Without reading extracts, he could recall declarations made by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway—declarations that were not the ebullitions of juvenile or excited brains. They were not speeches even made after dinner; but solemn declarations of Leaders of the Party, in which it was said the passion of Ireland for England was undying hate—not that feeling attaching to a sense of a grievance. Would that be removed by the doubtful benefits of the measure? It might possibly satisfy the Irish people, but not the Irish politicians and agitators. In dealing with hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, the House was dealing with men who were utterly irreconcilable, the bitterness of whose enmity no measure they could pass as a peace-offering could satisfy. ["Oh, oh!"] A well-known expression of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell)—one that he had solemnly declared—was that he would never rest until he had severed the last link that bound Ireland to England. Experience showed that that hon. Member did not speak lightly, or without meaning what he said, although it might now suit him and his Friends to repudiate some of their former utterances. If passed, would this measure be that of severance? No; it opened up a prospect of a renewal of all the old difficulties and disturbances, aggravated by the knowledge that the agitators would have in the Bill a vantage ground for greater strength. Irishmen of the future would remember that the English Parliament yielded the first step to reprisals and intimidation they were too timid to check, though the deeds were a disgrace to civilization and humanity, and would follow the same course to attain their end then. If they did so, he would not blame them half so much as the English nation, which had been their tutors and schoolmasters. Much nonsense had been talked about the chances of civil war in Ireland; but he could assure the hon. Member who spoke about the feeling in the North being all brag and bluster that he did not appreciate the situation. In the North-East of Ulster he believed they were more bellicose than in some other districts, or in the district where he (Lord Ernest Hamilton) himself resided; but he had made himself acquainted with the feelings of the farmers and labourers among whom he lived, and he said that the notion that immediately on the formation of an independent Irish Parliament there would be a rising of the entire Protestant population *en masse* was, of course, absurd and childish nonsense. The danger lay not so much in an independent Parliament itself as in the measures that were likely to result from that independent Parliament. The whole danger lay in a possible attempt to reverse the effects of the Plantation of Ulster of 1645. Whether the Plantation of Ulster was an act of justice or injustice it was not for him to say. That it was an act of policy no one could doubt. The peaceful and prosperous condition of the Province of Ulster, as compared with the rest of Ireland, fully exemplified it. Certain it was, however, that the descendants of those whose lands were confiscated on the flight of O'Neill looked back upon it as an act of the grossest injustice, and one that ought to be redressed; and many of these men lived in sight of the particular property or holdings which their ancestors had once possessed, and to which they considered themselves entitled. There were many Irish Roman Catholics who were as loyal as the Protestants; but there was not the shadow of a doubt that the Roman Catholics were under the impression, or rather the delusion, that on the formation of an independent Irish Parliament they would be reinstated in the lands that were taken from their progenitors. ["Oh, oh!"] He did not know whether the independent Parliament would encourage such a transaction; but it would find it very difficult to maintain peace between the opposing Parties. English Members could not understand the bitterness of the feeling between the two classes; but those who knew the bitterness and ill-feeling excited by Party tunes and Orange and Green flags would know that civil war was not a very remote contingency. ["Oh, oh!"] It was not a rising of Protestants that was feared, but a rising of Roman Catholics; and knowing, as he did, of the open boastings of the Nationalists in his part of the country, that the moment they got an independent Parliament they would do what they liked, and rid the country of every Protestant, and knowing, also, as he did, the determination of the Protestant farmers and others to resist any attempt to drive them out, he did not think the danger was one so entirely imaginary as some hon. Members would have it supposed. ["Oh, oh!"] It was the fashion for some Gentlemen to spend a few months in Ireland to solve the Irish difficulty. [*Cries of* "Smith!"] No; that right hon. Gentleman's visit was not so long. These Gentlemen came back Home Rulers, forgetting that they had been dealing with the greatest masters of blarney and humbug in the world. They all knew that the Irish were a genial, pleasant race, until you asked them to pay rent. There was a great deal of difference between their reception of a stranger who went to Ireland and a landlord who asked them for rent. The Prime Minister said that the Irish people were as loyal as anyone. That might be; but how could people be expected to be loyal, peaceable, or contented when the country was filled from coast to coast with political firebrands, who were always holding out to the people all kinds of promises which they knew could never be fulfilled? The Imperial Parliament might give a separate Parliament to Ireland; they might do what they would; but they would never restore peace and contentment to the country until those political firebrands were extinguished. He disbelieved altogether in the Prime Minister's assertion that the only alternative to this Bill was stringent and drastic coercion. Had there, he would ask, been anything so peculiarly terrible in the sketch which the Chief Secretary for Ireland drew of the measures which would have to be adopted, if the policy recommended by the Prime Minister were not adopted? It included the suppression of meetings and of newspapers, and the locking up of priests. Well, the suppression of disloyal meetings was a simple affair. There would not be much difficulty about that. He thought the country would also survive the loss of two or three newspapers. No doubt, however, that would be a serious loss to hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, because they would lose the only means by which they were able to bolster up each other's failings by mutual admiration. Then, as to parish priests, the great majority of the older ones were good and honest men; and if some of the younger ones chose to disgrace their cloth and to openly infringe the law they had no right to complain if they were treated as other criminals were, and were locked up. The fact, however, was that these extreme measures would never have to be adopted. The Prime Minister had admitted that coercion had failed, because it was not stringent enough; and that, he (Lord Ernest Hamilton) thought, was the truth.

He believed that if it were once brought home to the Irish people that the Government were resolute and determined to enforce the law at all costs and hazards these dangers would vanish. The moment the people saw, and the country saw, that the Government were in earnest, the country would settle down in quietness; and they would do so the sooner, because there was now no real cause of grievance in Ireland, as there was when Protestant ascendancy still prevailed, and there was, besides, the tithe grievance. [*Laughter.*] The truth was that there was no real grievance on the part of the Irish people that remained to be redressed. [*Cries of* "Oh!" *from the Home Rule Benches.*] If there was any grievance, in Heaven's name let hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway name it; and there was no one in the House who would oppose its removal. [An Irish MEMBER: How many did your father evict?] He thought that hon. Member would shortly be evicted from that House if he interrupted in that way. He was very much struck by an extract which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer read from a book called *The Radical Programme.* It began something like this—"That in the beginning of this century there had been many distinct and tangible grievances in Ireland, and those engendered discontent; but that during the century the grievances had been removed, but the discontent still remained." That was the exact truth. The grievances had been removed; but discontent did prevail in Ireland, and would remain till the end of time, whatever was done. The fact of the matter came to this—that when this experimental measure had been tried and failed, the Government would have to try force to amend the mischief they had done; but then it would be too late for any but extreme measures. The crisis would then be of such a nature that it could only be dealt with by military force. They were not asked to consider the Bill on its merits. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had tried to work on their fears by picturing what evils and dangers they would have to encounter if it was not passed; but he did not tell the House that if they passed the Bill in obedience to such warnings it would encourage the enemies of England everywhere, for it would be a most abject surrender to foreign dynamitards on the part of Britons, who boasted that they never would be slaves.

MR. BICKERSTETH (Shropshire, Newport): I should hardly feel justified in rising to take part in a discussion in which the House has listened to so many right hon. and hon. Gentlemen whose utterances carry a weight and authority which I neither pretend nor seek to emulate, were it not that I am anxious as a new Member, however insignificant, to say how cordially I subscribe to every word which has fallen in the course of this debate from the noble Marquess the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington), with regard to the responsibilities under which we lie on this question to the constituencies who sent us to Parliament. I am sure I speak not only for myself, but for many hon. Members who sit on these Benches, when I say that the work for which we asked the constituencies to return us to Parliament was the accomplishment of the programme to which the noble Marquess alluded, that fourfold Mid Lothian programme, which was accepted with such singular unanimity, not only by the Liberal Party but by the country at large; for I think I am within the mark if I say that the greater part of it was, in principle at least, accepted by hon. Gentlemen opposite. I do not mean that the difficulties of the Government of Ireland were unforeseen. On the contrary, those difficulties, great as they were before, had been, in our opinion, enormously aggravated by the policy of allowing Ireland to drift, which had been adopted by the Party to which hon. Gentlemen opposite belong. But, in view of those difficulties, what was the course which we advocated, and which we urged the constituencies to adopt? Why, Sir, if there was one point more than another upon which we most strongly insisted, it was the paramount necessity of returning to power the Liberal Party, and, above all, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, in a position which should be perfectly independent of any combination which might be contrived by the Tory Party and those who follow the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). In making that appeal we had high encouragement; we had the example of the right hon. Gentleman himself, who warned his constituents that there was hardly any prospect so much to be deprecated as the possibility of the Liberal Party being obliged to approach the solution of the Irish problem in a position that was not absolutely independent. If words meant anything at all, the country was cautioned that if the Liberal Party were returned to Parliament in no greater strength than sufficed to secure a majority by the help of the Parnellite vote the temptation would be enormous—would be well-nigh irresistible—to be unduly swayed by that vote. The proverb says that to be forewarned is to be forearmed; and these very circumstances having arisen, this very prospect which seemed so alarming being now realized, I must say that the last thing we were prepared to witness was the spectacle of the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues throwing to the winds—I will not say their principles, but every principle with which they were credited by the country on this Irish Question, and making haste to fall into the very temptation which the Prime Minister so clearly foresaw, and from which, with an earnestness that has acquired a most painful pathos from his subsequent action, he entreated the country to save him. Two or three nights ago the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant (Mr. John Morley) objected, if I understood him rightly, to this line of argument, on the ground that this raking up of inconsistencies was very idle and very childish. Now I am far from saying that consistency is a plea which would avail you, if you determined to adhere to a course which you knew or discovered to be wrong, simply because you were pledged to it by previous utterances; but there are two views in which consistency may be regarded. You may be perfectly consistent even when you change your line of conduct, provided that you do so by the application of fixed principles to changed or altered circumstances; but I say you are justly chargeable with inconsistency when, to circumstances precisely similar or clearly foreseen, you apply principles diametrically opposed to those which you have hitherto led people to believe you would support; you are justly chargeable with inconsistency when you make light of consistency, in order to find an excuse for doing violence to scruples and to axioms which have never been proved to be erroneous, but which you find to be inconvenient *impedimentæ* in making an entirely new departure. If hon. Members think I am not justified in these remarks by anything that has occurred, I can only ask them, in all honesty, to tell me how many of us Liberal Members do they suppose would now be sitting on these Benches if the constituencies had imagined for one instant that we were asking them to return the right hon. Gentleman to power, not in order that he might carry out the valuable if unexciting programme upon which we were all agreed, but in order that he might, by the help of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his followers, carry out this gigantic scheme for the dissolution of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland? ["Oh, oh!"] We certainly have not been without indications that we should be invited to engage in some such enterprize. In the formation of the Government we saw the significant admission into the Cabinet of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. We had one indication of the place to which social order was likely to be relegated under the new *régime*, in the amazing announcement of the Chief Secretary, that he intended to constitute himself the judge how far, and in what cases, the lawful decisions of Her Majesty's Courts in Ireland should be enforced. We had another indication, a most unwelcome one, pointing in the same direction, when we heard the same right hon. Gentleman, in this House, describe one of the most brutal murders that have disgraced the annals of Ireland in recent times, as an "unfortunate death," and when—I can but speak from the impression made on my own mind by the incident—the word "murder" was apparently only wrung from him by the scarcely suppressed indignation of the House. All this time we were advised, in the language of the Prime Minister, to cultivate a wholesome incredulity. The horse was being walked up and down; but we were adjured to pay no attention to those irresponsible persons, who assured us that this most unlikely looking animal was really the one on which we were expected to stake our money. Well, Sir, the scheme is now before us, and the time has come when we must ask ourselves, in sober earnest, why it is that we are called upon to take this tremendous step? In my opinion, not an argument has been advanced for this measure which has not been ably and conclusively dealt with, either on this or on the opposite side of the House; but there are one or two upon which I should like to say a few words. Much has been said in certain quarters of the original flaw in the mode by which the Union between Great Britain and Ireland was brought about. I have not a word to say in defence of the jobbery and corruption by which the passage of that measure was secured; but whoever uses arguments of that nature in support of a policy of reversal, I am sure we shall hear nothing of the kind from the Prime Minister. I need only refer the House to the words used by the right hon. Gentleman in this House in the course of the Burmah debate, on the 22nd of last February, when he quoted the annexation of Scinde under the Government of Sir Robert Peel, as a case in which, though the step met with the hearty disapproval of every Member of the then existing Cabinet, "Yet"—I quote *The Times* report of the right hon. Gentleman's words—

> "there was not a single man there who thought that any step ought to be taken for the purpose of reversing the policy. The question is not for the original justice of the annexation, but whether you will do more good or evil by proceeding to a reversal."

Nor can it be urged that we are asked to take this step in response to the appeal of an united nation. I acknowledge that this measure would be accepted by the great majority of the Irish Representatives as a step in the direction of those ultimate objects which they have at heart; but on the other hand you have a powerful minority, representing by far the greater part of the property, the education, and the intelligence of the country, representing, in short, all those elements which make for the stability and progress of a civilized community, who are resolutely opposed to this change. Is it then that the supporters of this policy are persuaded that the change is inevitable, that it must come sooner or later, and that we had better concede at once what we shall be forced to yield at last? Sir, I hold that this argument is an insult to the spirit and patriotism of the British people. Such a catastrophe as the disruption of the Union can only be inevitable if the British people are too lazy or too unpatriotic to prevent it; and happily we have not the slightest warrant for any supposition of the kind. But are we urged to pass the measure because it will bring peace and contentment to Ireland? Unfortunately this is not the first time similar arguments have been advanced in support of legislation for the Sister Island. Within recent years you have disestablished the Irish Church; you have revolutionised the system of land tenure in Ireland; and without for a moment disputing the wisdom and justice of your policy in either case, it is impossible to forget that each of these measures in turn was advocated as a sure panacea for all the discontent and disaffection of Ireland; and in each case experience has shown that these optimist anticipations were destined to be completely falsified. And in this connection, it is impossible to be blind to the fact, of which we were so forcibly reminded the other night by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain)—that the Minister who urges us to adopt this policy is the same statesman who so strangely misread the probable issue of the great struggle waged by the Northern States of America for the maintenance of their Union. As he then miscalculated the fund of patriotism and backbone in those sturdy Northerners, who were determined that their Union should not be dismembered, so I believe does he now miscalculate the determination of the people of Great Britain and of the loyal population of Ireland that, come what may, the integrity of this United Kingdom shall be maintained against all enemies, be they within or without our borders. And if that is the kind of argument upon which the advocates of this measure rely, what are we to think of the announcement, at the very outset, that an inseparable part of the scheme is a vast project of land purchase by which the landlords, the most prominent portion of the loyal population, are to be bought out? I will not attempt to tread upon forbidden ground by entering now upon the merits or demerits of any measure of this kind; but we are entitled, at least, to ask why it is an inseparable part of the scheme which the Prime Minister now wishes us to adopt? The only conceivable answer to that question—at least the only answer I have ever heard, and if there is another I trust some hon. Member will favour us with it—is that the landlords must in equity be bought out, because you are going to set up a Parliament in Dublin under which their rights and interests would not be treated with common justice. But that answer condemns the whole scheme. If the Parliament you are about to establish cannot be trusted to govern justly, why in the world should you set it up? And, again, it is very well to buy out the landlords; but though they are the most prominent, they are but a small portion of the loyal population of Ireland. What is to become of the rest—the non-landlord portion of the loyal population—when, by buying out the landlords, you have removed the one class on whom they might rely to protect them? Are they, the Loyalists, belonging to the professional, middle, and lower classes, scattered here and there throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, to be abandoned to this Dublin Parliament, to which it would, on your own showing, be unsafe to confide the interests of the landlords? I hold that such a course is impossible. We cannot divest ourselves of our responsibility to the loyal population of Ireland. In the earlier part of this debate the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) reminded the House that, in the course of the debates on the Franchise Bill in 1884, the Prime Minister endeavoured to allay the apprehensions of the Loyalist population of Ireland, in view of the lowering of the franchise in that country, by assuring them that in the new Parliament no measure adverse to their interests could be carried without the consent of a majority of the Representatives of England and of Scotland. I hold that now is the time to redeem that pledge. Can anybody suppose that the Loyalists of Ireland will be reassured by the fantastic and empirical checks which the Prime Minister proposes to introduce into the Parliamentary system which he wishes to create? No, Sir, that is not the pledge which the Loyalists have a right to demand from this Parliament. They have a right to know that their interests are in safer keeping than that of a statutory Parliament in Dublin. They have a right to know that this Imperial Parliament will not surrender to any such Body those whose only crime is loyalty to their Sovereign and attachment to the Constitution under which they live. I do not propose, in the course of these remarks, to enter into any detailed criticism of the provisions of this measure; but there are two points to which I beg to invite the particular attention of the House. The first is the fiscal unity which it is proposed to preserve between Great Britain and Ireland. Now, Sir, I am not so presumptuous as to attribute any confusion of ideas to the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister; but I confess I am at a loss to understand what is meant by the fiscal unity of the Empire, if the word Empire is understood in its large and general sense as including the Indian and Colonial Dependencies of the Crown. If the Prime Minister intends the word "Empire" to include our great self-governing Colonies, then there is no such thing as the "fiscal unity of the Empire;" but if we are to understand the expression as meaning the fiscal unity of the United Kingdom, then I say that fiscal unity, as part and parcel of the essential unity and integrity of the United Kingdom, is an excellent thing; but if you destroy all or most of the other essentials of unity, then in trying to keep up a fiscal unity—and the difficulty, I might say the impossibility, of such an endeavour has been expounded to demonstration by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) in his masterly speech this evening—then, I say, in trying to keep up a fiscal unity you are attempting to maintain the very tie which so exasperated our North American Colonies in the last century that it led to the War of Independence and the separation of the United States from the British Crown. Again, it is proposed with one hand to place Ireland to all practical intents and purposes in the position of a self-governing Colony, while with the other hand you impose on her a disability to which no self-governing Colony would submit for a moment. Which of your great self-governing Colonies would remain loyal for six months, if it had to pay a yearly tribute to the Imperial Exchequer similar in proportion to that which it is proposed to exact from Ireland, without the slightest voice in the appropriation or expenditure of that tribute? And do you suppose for one moment that the Irish Parliament would remain silent if it saw the policy of this country, to whose Exchequer Ireland was making so substantial a contribution, being shaped for ends of which the Irish people disapproved? Is it not certain that the Irish Parliament would instantly overstep its functions and attempt to exercise some control over the policy of the Imperial Government? This notion of the Irish Parliament overstepping its functions and acting *ultra vires* has been scouted as a hypothetical risk. Well, Sir, all risks may be called hypothetical; but I maintain that this is a risk which our own recent experience teaches us is most likely to occur. I am sure it will be within the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister that not four years ago the Senate and Commons of Canada forwarded, through the Viceroy, to be laid at the foot of the Throne, an important Address to Her Majesty, containing six paragraphs, in one of which a request was made that some form of Federal Government might be conceded to Ireland; and in another it was asked that the Irish political prisoners might be released. It is needless to say that these requests met with a sharp rebuke from the noble Lord who was at the time Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the Government of which the present Prime Minister was the Head; but there you have a case, a recent case, in which so loyal and orderly a Body as the Legislature of Canada could not resist the temptation to interfere in matters beyond its province; and how can anybody suppose that the Irish Parliament, with the real and substantial excuse which the payment of the proposed tribute would afford, would not, on the very first occasion which presented itself, attempt to exercise some control over the policy in which Ireland would have such a vital interest? The inevitable result would be a conflict between the Imperial Government and the Parliament of Dublin, with consequences that are so obvious that I need waste no words upon them. There is, in short, no finality in this measure; it is a half-way house on the road to entire separation, and only provides the most powerful leverage for those who wish to destroy the last link which binds the two countries together. Regarding it, as I do, in this light, I appeal to the House to recall the forcible words which the Prime Minister himself used in this House on the 24th of last February, when we had under discussion the Bill relating to the tenure of houses in Ireland, of which the hon. Member for North Mayo (Mr. Crilly) had moved the second reading. With reference to that measure, the Prime Minister's words were—

> "My hon. Friend said he wished to bring in the thin end of the wedge. To bring in the thin end of the wedge might be quite right upon certain occasions; but I think it is a sound principle that you should never bring in the thin end of the wedge unless you are also prepared for the thick end of the wedge."—(3 *Hansard*, [302], 1151.)

I heartily concur in that principle; and, in the question now before us, I ask the House to remember that though the thin end of the wedge which the Prime Minister is endeavouring to drive into the Constitution may be but the dismemberment of the United Kingdom, the thick end is the disruption of the Empire. I will not encroach further on the patience with which the House has been good enough to listen to these remarks; but I cannot forbear from saying that it is with no satisfaction—on the contrary, it is with sincere pain—that I find myself on this great question in antagonism to one whom I honour so much as the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister. There are, however, higher considerations than that of allegiance to any single statesman, however honoured, however illustrious; and I can only say that nothing would have induced me to take the course which I have adopted on this subject but the sincere belief that the measure which the Prime Minister is now proposing is one fraught with ruin to the true interests of Ireland, and with every prospect of disaster to the Empire.

Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guilford) said, he felt sure that the House had listened with satisfaction to the fearless criticism passed upon the Bill by the hon. Member who had just sat down. But, undoubtedly, the most interesting speech of the evening was that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; for he was the only Member of the Government who had spoken from any previous administrative experience with regard to Ireland. Throughout the last two Parliaments the right hon. Gentleman had been the most strenuous advocate of coercive legislation. How was it possible to reconcile the right hon. Gentleman's utterances on the present occasion with the previous conduct of the Prime Minister? If that right hon. Gentleman had any conception that, as a sequel to the legislation which he had himself previously carried, it would be found necessary to introduce such a Bill as the present, it was a case of simple wickedness to the people of Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the government of Ireland would be impossible, if this Bill were thrown out. But he could not see that matters had so much changed since last July, when the Government proposed to renew repressive legislation. It was impossible to avoid the conclusion that many hon. Members were following the Prime Minister, rather than their own convictions, in the vain hope that the right hon. Gentleman had at last discovered the philosopher's stone with regard to Ireland. It had been claimed for the Prime Minister that he had discovered, on many previous occasions, the one mode by which law and order might be maintained in Ireland without coercive measures. What had the right hon. Gentleman asked of that House which the House had not granted to him? Everything he had asked for had been granted to him for many years past. Under the right hon. Gentleman's influence, we had legalized confiscation, made compromises with crime, and condoned high treason. At the instance of the Prime Minister, we had destroyed a Church, driven capital out of the country, and shaken property to its foundation. The result of all his measures was that, coming in "a foreign garb," as the right hon. Gentleman now told them, they were not accepted by the people of Ireland. Considering the facts as to the material prosperity of the country, was there anything that justified the Prime Minister in asking them to take a step which many hon. Members believed would shake the Empire to its base? The Protestants of Ireland were to be handed over to a Government which would be Ultramontane in the sense demanded by the priests, and Jacobin in the sense demanded by the anarchists. They were about to hand over the country to the care of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his followers. The question was, whether, in so doing, they would not hand over the country and the lives of their fellow-subjects to the American Fenians? [*Laughter.*] He thought the House ought to know whether there was not a distinct relation between the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his Colleagues and the American Fenians. He was not going to give expression to any opinions which he could not sustain; but he wished to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to explain some remarks he made in that House five years ago. He (Mr. Brodrick) might remind hon. Gentlemen who were not in the last Parliament that a very extraordinary speech was made on the first Coercion Bill by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. John Dillon), who was then Member for Tipperary. The hon Member stated to the House that, if he were an Irish farmer, and men came to turn him out of his house and land, he would shoot as many of them as he could. [Mr. DILLON said, he had not used such words.] He took them from *Hansard*. The right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer remarked that the doctrine of the Land League, as expounded by the hon. Member, was the doctrine of treason and assassination; and he added that the Land League was conducted by notorious Fenians, some of whom had been convicted. That was a deliberate statement by the right hon. Gentleman, that there was at that time a connection between the American Fenians and the Land League. He (Mr. Brodrick) should like to know from the right hon. Gentleman whether he could assure them that he now believed that those who now represented the Irish Party were no longer connected with American Fenians? The object of the Fenian conspiracy was to separate Ireland from England, and to take Ireland from the Dominions of the Crown of England; yet the right hon. Gentleman, as one of Her Majesty's Advisers, was prepared to hand over the lives and property of the Queen's subjects to an Organization, having for its object the severance of Ireland from Great Britain. No denial of those being their objects had been made by hon. Members who now spoke for the National Party. It was all very well for Irish Members now to make turtle-dove speeches, interlarded with Scriptural quotations; but those who were in the last Parliament had heard them declare their hatred and undying spirit of hostility to the British dominion in Ireland. The hon. Member for the City of Cork probably thought that, because he had won, he might be generous—he had induced the Prime Minister to adopt the feelings and language of those who had expressed their undying hatred to British domination; but although the hon. Member might be able to change the tone of his language and that of his Followers, yet he would not be able to change the feeling of the people of Ireland. That feeling was for complete separation; a spirit had been aroused in Ireland which would not be allayed, because hon. Members saw place and power within their reach. The Prime Minister thought he had cut down the Irish Upas tree; but only the branches were in Ireland, the roots were in America, and it was only by cutting the branches from the root that they would rot, wither, and decay. With respect to guarantees, they were necessary in order to induce the people of England to pass this Bill; but he (Mr. Brodrick) attached no importance whatever to them. Should the Bill pass, in a few months the Prime Minister would again be there in full song, telling them the unity of the Empire required their abrogation. The hon. Member for the City of Cork had told the House plainly that he could not give guarantees, and had advised English statesmen to trust the Irish people altogether, or not to trust them at all. What hope was there that any guarantees would be maintained? They knew with regard to Grattan's Parliament, which was mainly a Protestant and a landlord Parliament, that they found it impossible to get on with the Parliament of England; and was it likely that the new Parliament, suffering under a feeling of injustice at having been deprived of the power which might have accrued to it, would be long before it came into conflict with that of England? These guarantees were put forward merely to delude the people of England—they might be honestly intended, but their effect would be to restrain revolution by a thread. How could they take a hopeful view of the matter, when the Prime Minister showed no confidence in the measure himself? The right hon. Gentleman spoke of giving the people their own Government, and letting classes live at peace with each other; but could they hope that a nation like the Irish, which for centuries had been guided by sentiment and prejudice, would have any regard to the nice observance of economic principles, or much respect for the laws of this country? Their experience of Irish Local Bodies had, at present, been far from encouraging; they had simply been hotbeds of rowdyism, sedition, and jobbery. It had been said that the Legislature could not refuse to grant the demands of 86 Irish Members; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer appeared to share that view. He should like to remind the right hon. Gentleman that, in 1852, he wrote to the late Lord Derby a letter containing the following words:—

> "A new doctrine has been started that the policy of the Administration is not to be regulated by their own conviction of the national advantage, but by the accident of the poll and the present fancies of the constituencies."

The right hon. Gentleman added—

> "That politics in such a case become a scramble for the most adroit and most unscrupulous."

If the right hon. Gentleman now really meant to urge that the vote of the Irish Members could commit the House to the stupendous change proposed by the Prime Minister, his own reasoning in earlier years was absolutely against him. He believed that most of the Members on his side of the House, and many on the other, were prepared to lay aside all considerations of Party in dealing with this subject, and were ready to act with any Minister who would refuse to justify the great surrender involved in the proposals before the House. The whole legislation of the last few years had been in the direction of protecting the rights of the many against the privileges of the few. But now they were confronted with a scheme which would sacrifice the interests of 32,000,000 in this country, in order to confer a most doubtful advantage upon 4,000,000 of their fellow-subjects. He ridiculed the idea that the guarantees about which so much had been said would be sustained, and if they were now accepted, it was only to lubricate the passage of the Bill. They might depend upon it that the minority in Ireland would morally become the majority to uphold the law and to maintain in its entirety the connection between England and the Sister Country. They were now face to face with 4,000,000 of people against 32,000,000 of the English population, and he felt justified, in the name of good government, and in the name of British citizenship, in giving his strongest resistance to this ill-fated and ill-omened measure.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I hope I shall be more merciful to the House than any one of the three hon. Members who have spoken last, who have all spoken against the Bill, and one of whom—the noble Lord who spoke first of the three (Lord Ernest Hamilton)—certainly did not succeed in raising the tone of the debate. [*Laughter.*] I will try myself, in spite of what fell from the noble Lord and the jeering laughter with which hon. Members opposite receive my remarks, to regain the higher level at which it had proceeded until the noble Lord rose. My object in rising now is simply to endorse the effective protest which has been made by my hon. Friend the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Mr. E. R. Russell), against any imputation which might be cast against Scotch opinion upon this question, in consequence of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen). The right hon. Gentleman referred to what had been stated by the Prime Minister about the opinion of certain English boroughs at the late Election. The Prime Minister said that certain English boroughs had spoken with an Irish accent. Applying the same figure of speech to the oration of the right hon. Member for East Edinburgh, I would say that the City of Edinburgh has spoken this evening, not with a Caledonian, but with a Cockney accent. I have said that I was going to be more merciful than the noble Lord and the two hon. Members who last addressed the House. I am now going to abandon altogether the remarks which I had intended to make to-night, and to leave them over for another occasion. I will only give hon. Gentlemen opposite the benefit of one extract from it. I was going to call attention to a singular statement made by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) as to one of the main provisions of the Bill. Speaking of the proposal of two Orders sitting in the same House, but voting separately on certain occasions, the noble Lord said that he had consulted every authority, ancient and modern, and that he could not find a precedent for such a proposal. I congratulate the noble Lord on the serious turn his studies have taken; but I beg to say that he has committed a mistake often committed by beginners, in consulting authorities which are somewhat difficult to understand. He ought to have gone to some elementary text-book, and, if he had, he would not have made the mistake he had made last night. If he had gone to the Clerk at the Table he would have found out his mistake. Sir Thomas Erskine May has written a book on *Parliamentary Practice*, a short extract from which I will venture to read to the House. It is in regard to the manner of taking the poll in Parliament, and Sir Thomas Erskine May says, in page 18, that "The ancient treatise *De modo tenendi Parliamentum*—

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: What!

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: It means "of the manner of holding Parliament."

"The ancient treatise *De modo tenendi Parliamentum*, if of unquestioned authority, would be conclusive of the fact that the three estates"—

meaning the three estates of which one is represented by this House—

"ordinarily sat together; but that, whenever any difficult and doubtful case of peace or war arose, each estate sat separately by direction of the King."

[An hon. Member: When?] I cannot continue the historical studies of the noble Lord at this hour, and indeed it is enough for me to refer the hon. Member to Sir Erskine May's authorities. I think I may almost venture to say that Lord Macaulay's school-boy, whom, in my own mind, I have always identified with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), would be able to supply the hon. Member with the information he wants. ["Oh, oh!"] Allow me to set hon. Members right. Lord Macaulay's school-boy was a prodigy of learning, and that is the reason why I identified him with the right hon. Gentleman. As I said before, my object is simply, in the name of Scotland, and as a Scotch Member and a Scotchman, to protest against any deduction being drawn as to Scotch opinion from the speech which has been made by the right hon. Member for East Edinburgh. I believe that Scotland, on this question, as on the questions which were raised in the General Election, will be faithful in the future, as in the present, to the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister. I do not however, support this Bill without reservations. I believe we may make important alterations in it, and when the proper time comes I shall be prepared to lay some of them before the House. But I cannot understand why noble Lords and right hon. Gentlemen should occupy the time of the House at this stage in making speeches, every one of which is more fit for Committee than even for the second reading of the Bill. If I may venture to appeal to some of our influential Leaders, or, rather, former Leaders, of our Party upon this question, I would say to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) that his argument, as far as it has been heard—certainly, his tale has as yet only been half-told—that his argument showed, no doubt, good reasons for his leaving the Cabinet, but no grounds for refusing a first or second reading to this Bill. I would respectfully remind the right hon. Gentleman of the awful future which he is preparing for himself. He is condemning himself to a life-long political companionship with the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington. I would venture also to appeal to hon. Members who belong to another section of the Liberal Party to take a similar lesson on this occasion. I know that it has always been the traditional policy of the Whigs, and I suppose it will always be, to take the line of the least responsibility; but I would appeal to them whether, on this occasion, the line of the least responsibility is not the line of this Bill. They have to face the possibility of seeing the most tremendous coercive measures applied to Ireland that have ever been tried. They say, on the other side, that there is a possibility of resorting to coercive measures if this Bill passes; but they admit that such measures will be absolutely necessary if the Bill does not pass. Then, I say that they will be incurring serious responsibility, in the event of their not succeeding in preventing the passing of the Bill, even by reducing the majority by which it shall pass. It is almost as important that the Bill should pass by a large majority in this House as that it should pass at all. Then, I think that right hon. Gentlemen who have been Leaders of the Liberal Party are incurring a very heavy responsibility in bringing about a disruption of the Liberal Party. I will only say, and I say it from my heart, that whatever the effect of this Bill may be, it will always be a source of satisfaction to me, within the first few months of my Membership of the House of Commons, to have raised my voice and given my vote in favour of a measure which I believe is honestly intended to bring to an end the oldest, the longest, the most bitter, and the most unnecessary feud that ever divided two branches of the British people.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not quite sure that I am able to congratulate the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down upon the success of his laudable effort to raise the tone of this debate. As far as I could understand him, he informed us that the educated opinion of Scotland is in favour of supporting the Prime Minister without any regard to the provisions of this Bill. If I have not been able to catch the precise language of the hon. Member, I am unfortunate; but I hope that I am unfortunate, because I trust that the educated opinion of Scotland, as well as that of other parts of the United Kingdom, will regard this Bill on its merits, and not merely on the authority of the Prime Minister. Sir, this debate has been singularly prolonged for a debate upon the introduction of a Bill; but I think the House will be universally of opinion that, looking at the momentous issues for good or for evil with which the proposal of Her Majesty's Government is fraught, it has been by no means too prolonged. I wish that some one of the three Members of Her Majesty's Government who have followed the remarkable speech of the Prime Minister, which necessarily could not completely explain all the provisions of this great measure, had endeavoured to imitate his example, and to answer some of the criticisms which have been so ably addressed to the House during the course of the debate on the provisions of the Bill. It is no light matter, Sir, that at a time when all other countries in the world are consolidating their resources, when our most remote Colonies are endeavouring to draw together in closer union with the Mother Country, we should be asked to take the first step in splitting up the very kernel around which our great Empire is formed, and dividing, for legislative and administrative purposes, the two Islands that have been so closely associated hitherto. That is a step backward in the history of this country. It is contrary to the policy which has been pursued by the Rulers of England for generations—the policy which, in the early part of this century, was completed by Statesmen perhaps the most famous in the history of England, and which since that time has been defended and maintained by all their Successors, including the right hon. Gentleman himself. Why, Sir, are we asked to take this step? There is no change that can be alleged in the social and industrial relations between Great Britain and Ireland which would warrant such a policy. On the contrary, since the Union, steam and electricity have annihilated time and distance, and the commercial and industrial relations of the two countries have every year become more closely entwined. Is it, Sir, the wish of the inhabitants of Great Britain that this change should be made? I do not believe that in any part of Great Britain there is a vestige of popular sentiment in its favour. The very constituents of the right hon. Gentleman himself, his most enthusiastic admirers at Edinburgh, presented to him only a few weeks ago a strong protest in favour of maintaining this Legislative Union. [Mr. GLADSTONE dissented.] I believe it would be utterly impossible to collect together in any part of Great Britain an English or Scotch audience which would vote in favour of Home Rule. [*Cries of* "Yes!"] I know what hon. Gentlemen mean. They mean this—that this proposal now comes before the country recommended by the great authority and eloquence of the right hon. Gentleman, and that, like the hon. Member who has just sat down, many an audience in England, unfortunately, will support anything that is proposed with the weight of that authority. Well, Sir, I must say that it seems to me difficult on the face of it to understand why the right hon. Gentleman himself has so far enlarged the proposals which he has hitherto made with reference to local self-government in Ireland; why he has gone so far beyond any ideas which up to December last his nearest and most trusted political associates believed him to entertain; why he has deprived himself of the invaluable advantage of their support, and taken in exchange the cheers and the votes of hon. Members below the Gangway. Sir, there is a feeling, of course, in Ireland in favour of this measure, and a very strong feeling on the part of those who have returned 85 Home Rule Members to this House. But, Sir, when the Attorney General, last night, described the antipathy in Ireland to the establishment of the Union with Great Britain, I noticed that he spoke of the protests of the Peers of Ireland, of the Irish Bar, of the Professions, of the Orangemen themselves, and of all the unbribed intellect of Ireland against the establishment of that Union; but he failed to quote any similar opposition now existing to the maintenance of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. Sir, why is it that the right hon. Gentleman has made this proposal, which, to borrow a phrase from his own Chief Secretary for Ireland, has "pulverized" the Liberal Party? He has told us that it is because he entertains the strongest conviction of the gravity and urgency of the Irish problem, and finds in this scheme the only way to restore to Ireland the first conditions of civilized life. Well, Sir, in my humble opinion, the right hon. Gentleman has taken a most extraordinary means, on his own showing, of restoring social order to Ireland. He has borrowed the policy which was proposed by the Chief Secretary for Ireland before he was a Member of the Government. That right hon. Gentleman then recommended the Government of the day to capture the Leaders of the Irish Revolutionary Party and to give them power in order to make them responsible. This policy is nothing less than giving up the enforcement of the law in despair. It is, to use the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a capitulation to those who have successfully defied the authority of the Executive and the law of the Imperial Parliament, in the belief that those very persons and their successors will ever hereafter humbly submit to the supremacy which they have successfully defied. Now, Sir, I must say that, looking to the past, it is a most extraordinary proposition to come from Her Majesty's Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us this evening that the National League, to which undoubtedly the power in Ireland will be handed over by this Bill, was in apostolic succession to the Land League. Now, Sir, what is the history of the Land League, and what was the opinion of the Members of Her Majesty's present Government of the Land League and its leaders? The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as my hon. Friend behind me has already reminded the House, told Parliament, when occupying the responsible Office of Home Secretary, that the doctrines of the Land League were doctrines of assassination and treason. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, speaking at Knowsley, in October, 1881, after he had imprisoned the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), spoke of the conflict between his own Government and the followers of the hon. Member. And what did he say? He said—

> "It is a great issue, a conflict for the very first and elementary principles upon which civil society is constituted. It is idle to talk of law, liberty, religion, or civilization, if those gentlemen"—who are now his allies—"are to carry through the reckless and chaotic schemes they have devised. How are those schemes to be carried into effect? By intimidation in three forms—danger to life, destruction to property, and ruin through the withdrawal of capital."

Now, Sir, this National League and its leaders, in apostolic succession to the Land Leaguers, thus denounced by the right hon. Gentleman, are intrusted by him with the restoration of social order in Ireland; and in the most innocent and childlike confidence the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) assures the House that, in his opinion, these Gentlemen who have been thus described by the Prime Minister will undo all the evils they have themselves brought about—that they will attract back to Ireland the capital that they themselves have driven away; and that, if in the government of Ireland they should make some little mistake, they will be at once amenable to English criticism, perhaps in the shape of an article in *The Times* or *The Daily News*, and make up their minds to do what is right, according to English opinion. What I should like to know is, whether the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister with regard to the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his associates has changed since 1881; and, if so, what are the reasons for that change of opinion? Because, if no reasons can be given, I will venture to say that this policy which he has recommended to Parliament is nothing but a policy of blackmail—a policy which has often been the resource of weak Executives and of decaying nations, but which, so far as I know, has never been successfully pursued. But, Sir, we are told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this Bill is not, in his opinion, so much a good in itself as a choice of evils, and that the only alternative is coercion. Very well. That is a point on which I differ entirely from the right hon. Gentleman; because, to my mind, this Bill is no alternative proposal. If an alternative could be proposed for coercion in Ireland, no one would welcome it more cordially than I would. I believe that every Member of this House would desire to see the inhabitants of Ireland prosperous and contented; and if the Prime Minister, or anyone else, could drive away from Ireland by his scheme the evil and misery entailed upon all classes of the population in that country by years of continued political agitation, and remove that great weakness to the British Empire which Irish disaffection undoubtedly causes, why, then, the right hon. Gentleman would be worthy even of the fulsome praise lavished upon him by hon. Members below the Gangway. But, Sir, this Bill can be no alternative for coercion unless it is a real settlement of this question. If it should prove not to be so, I think that even Her Majesty's Government themselves must admit that nothing can exceed the evil that has been done even by the proposal to introduce it. Now, is it likely to be a real settlement of the question? The prophecies of peace of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) are not quite sufficient warrant that it is so. Anyone who looks back to Irish history will see that similar prophecies were made before Catholic Emancipation, and before the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Irish Church; and we know, to our cost, that those prophecies have not been fulfilled. But I turn rather to see how far the provisions of this measure, as they have been explained to us, satisfy that which has been repeatedly declared to be the object of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his Followers below the Gangway. I think I am not misrepresenting those hon. Members when I say that they have repeatedly declared the object of their Party to be the national independence of Ireland. [Mr. T. M. HEALY: Legislative independence.] Well, I could quote a good many extracts, only that I do not like to take up the time of the House, in support of what I say. These were the words of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) at Castlebar—

> "Speaking for myself, and I believe for the rest of the Irish people and all my Colleagues, I have to declare that we will never accept, either expressly or implied, anything but the full and complete right to arrange our own affairs, to make our land a nation, to secure for her, free from outside control, the right to direct her own course among the peoples of the world."

Is not that national independence? And how far is it carried into effect by the proposal which the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister has made to the House? Now, I might have gone further; I might have alluded to the opinions of certain Members of Her Majesty's Government as to what the demands of hon. Members for Ireland really were. I might have quoted the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. I remember a speech which he made in Devonshire last autumn, which, I may observe, was really spoken by himself and not by anybody else, in which he used these words—

> "Since the declaration of Mr. Parnell there can be no doubt what is the policy which he and his Party have adopted. It is the policy of the absolute separation of the two countries."

And then the right hon. Gentleman went on to ask—

> "How has that declaration been met? Two speakers eminently entitled to represent the Liberal Party, Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, have spoken on this matter, and they have spoken in a manner worthy of their position and of the Party to which they belong."

Well, Sir, the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) have consistently maintained the position which they then occupied. But what of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer? He went on, of course, to find fault with my noble Friend the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) who had made a speech about the same time, because my noble Friend did not make a similar protest against the doctrines of the Member for the City of Cork, and he attributed to him all those schemes for an alliance with the Irish Nationalists which the Leaders of the Liberal Party were accustomed to attribute to him at that time. But at that time the right hon. Gentleman had not come to so very strong an opinion as he expressed to-night about the enormous change in the situation made by our refusal to renew the provisions of the Crimes Act; because, in that very speech, he twitted us with not enforcing law and order in Ireland. Nor, on the other hand, had he made up his mind to be sponsor in the House of Commons for a Home Rule measure. I must say that I think the position which the right hon. Gentleman now occupies could not be better described than in some words which he applied in the same speech to the Members of the late Government. He said that—

> "To conduct the Government of this country, when the condition is that you should conciliate the support of men whose principles are foreign to your own, that you should conduct it by carrying out a policy which you have just been denouncing as dangerous and mischievous to the country, that seems to me of all occupations in life the least desirable, nay, I was going to call it ignominious."

I do not grudge the right hon. Gentleman his position as Chancellor of the Exchequer. I would far rather sit on this side of the House than take the course which has been so accurately described by him. I revert now to what I proved to be the demand of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his Followers—a demand which is nothing less than the national independence of Ireland. Now, what I should like to know is, how those hon. Members can for a moment suppose that the national independence of Ireland is secured by the provisions of this measure? Ireland is to have no power whatever over the Succession to the Crown. She is to have nothing to do with the Army and Navy of the Empire. She is to have no control over Foreign or Colonial affairs.

Irish Members are to be absolutely deprived of all that in which certainly they have taken hitherto a very intelligent and powerful interest, and to which, I must say, they seem to me to have quite as much right as the inhabitants of any other part of the United Kingdom. In return for that, they are to receive less than the local liberties which are granted to the smallest self-governing Colony, and are to pay, what a Colony does not pay, an annual tribute of no inconsiderable amount to the Imperial Exchequer. Now, is it possible that Members from Ireland can be satisfied, or, if they are satisfied, that their Successors will be satisfied, with such a position as that? I should like to quote an authority upon this matter. A letter was written to *The Times* on the 17th of December last by a very high authority — the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor). What did he say?—

> "To tax Ireland for Imperial purposes and give Ireland no voice in Imperial affairs would be taxation without representation in a very aggravated form, and would be calculated to make the Empire odious instead of dear to the Irish people."

Well, but then, what is the alternative? The Prime Minister made an unanswerable argument as to the practical impossibility of permitting Irish Members to take part in Imperial affairs in this House, and excluding them from the consideration of English and Scotch affairs. I suppose it will be agreed that it would be an intolerable injustice, and contrary to their own wishes, that Irish Members, if they are to have a Parliament of their own in Dublin—which I hope they never will have—should also come here to interfere with English and Scotch affairs. But the Prime Minister stated that it passes the wit of man to draw a distinction between Imperial and English and Scotch affairs; and that, therefore, the Irish Members and Irish Peers cannot, if a domestic Legislature be given to Ireland, justly retain a seat in the Parliament at Westminster. But that appears now to be an open question with Her Majesty's Government. I am not quite sure whether certain inarticulate utterances of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not intimate to us that he, at any rate, strongly adhered to the view originally expressed by the Prime Minister; but, as yesterday, the question was still open, I wish to refer the House again to the views of the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool. He has expressed his opinion as to what would be the result of the adoption of such a proposal. He says—

> "If the system of self-government given to Ireland were deemed by the Irish people insufficient, it is probable that the Irish Members would act in the new Imperial Parliament as they do in the present. Imperial questions would be looked at by them, not from the Imperial standpoint, but as affording weapons to be employed between the two English Parties for purely Irish purposes. You might then have, what you have now, a distracting element in your Imperial Councils, judging things not on their intrinsic and Imperial merits, but on their bearing to Irish national aspirations."

The importance of that is that it is a statement of the opinion of a leading Member of the Irish Party as to what would be the result of the retention of Irish Members in this House before he knew what were the proposals of the right hon. Gentlemen opposite. Either way, it is not a very pleasant prospect. Whether you exclude the Irish Members, or whether you include them, you are landed in a difficulty, which is a very plain proof of the utterly unworkable nature of any scheme of Home Rule for Ireland. What I would ask is this —Bearing in mind the aspirations of the Irish Members, will this system of self-government, as the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool calls it, that is proposed by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, be deemed sufficient by the Irish Members? I will not go into details, but will merely take this one question of Customs and Excise. That is one of the vital propositions and essential parts of the foundation of this Bill, to quote the Prime Minister's words. [Mr. Gladstone: No, no!] I took the words down from the report of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. He said that the Irish Customs and Excise were to be under the Imperial Parliament. Does he contradict that? [Mr. Gladstone: The right hon. Gentleman has made a mistake.] I have no doubt that the Prime Minister will explain to us further what are the vital propositions of the Bill. I must say that if this is not a vital proposition, I think it ought to be, for I cannot conceive anything worse for the interests of Great Britain and Ireland than this—that the Customs and Excise should be partly under the Parliament at Westminster, and partly under the Parliament at Dublin. But what does the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool say to this suggestion? He says—

> "No settlement ought to be entertained, either by Irish or English statesmanship, which does not make Irishmen masters of all the affairs within the shores of Ireland."

An authority even greater than the hon. Member—I mean Mr. Michael Davitt—has distinctly demanded for the Irish Parliament the control of her Customs and Excise. And the hon. Member for the City of Cork has asked for power for the Irish Parliament to protect the Irish manufactures if the Irish Parliament wished to do so, and has said that no Parliamentary Assembly can prove satisfactory which has not the power to raise revenue for the purposes of Government in Ireland as might seem fit and best to that Assembly. We heard last night from the Attorney General a glowing and, as I think, a most fictitious picture of the commercial and industrial advantages to Ireland which were secured by Grattan's Parliament. Is it not perfectly clear that one of the main reasons which induce so many Irishmen to desire a Parliament in Dublin is the hope that that picture may be realized in practice? If it should prove, as I think it certainly would, that the statutory Parliament which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to set up is utterly incapable of realizing this hope, is it not certain that the people would be at once told, if Customs and Excise were reserved to the Imperial Parliament, that no Irish Parliament can do its duty to Irish industries unless it has the control of the Customs and the Excise; that this would at once be made a grievance; and that this final settlement, as the Prime Minister hopes it may be, will be pressed forward for revision by the Irish Parliament within six months of the unfortunate day on which it might become law? Of course I may be told, in reply to all this, that the Irish Members of this House, at least by tacit assent, have accepted the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. But why have they accepted his proposals? It is perfectly clear that they do not fulfil the object of national independence. Will any Irish Members who are followers of the hon. Member for the City of Cork stand up in this House and say that they will be content with these proposals as a final settlement of this question between the two nations? [Mr. W. O'Brien: Every man of them.] If that interruption means that those hon. Members are prepared to do so, I wonder that they have not taken part in this debate. [Mr. Dillon: I beg to say that I have risen several times to address the House.] One thing is perfectly clear—that neither the hon. Member for the City of Cork, nor the hon. Member for South Londonderry, who have spoken in this debate, have expressed the opinion that these proposals will be a final settlement. They have accepted them as far as they go, but they have expressed their strong desire that they should be very materially amended; they have accepted them, in fact, as an instalment, as a weapon by which, if not they, certainly others, will take very good care to secure that national independence which is the object of their desires. It seems to me as absolutely certain as anything in the future can be, that if you were to institute the Assembly which the right hon. Gentleman proposes, it would be powerless for good to Ireland, but would be powerful for mischief between Great Britain and Ireland. From the very first, I believe, it would be struggling to increase its authority; and how is that authority to be defined? How is the Bill which the right hon. Gentleman seeks to introduce to be interpreted in this respect as between the powers of the Imperial Parliament and those of the Irish Parliament? Why, the Chief Secretary told us on Friday night that any question of this nature is to be decided by the Judicial Committee of the English Privy Council. Is it possible to conceive a tribunal which would be less likely to give satisfaction to the people of Ireland? And if it could not give satisfaction, how would its decisions be enforced? This is not the only question. In approaching this matter I would say, with all humility, that not a few hon. Members seem to me entirely to ignore the forces that are at work, and that have always been at work, in Ireland. Her Majesty's Government have not ignored them, because, in proposing to constitute this statutory Parliament, they have known very well, as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said a little time ago, that they have to take into account the animosities and the hatred of generations; and, therefore, as a protection to the minority, they have accompanied the institution of this Parliament with certain safeguards which have already formed the topic of more than one speech in this debate. They have shown their mistrust of the Parliament they are about to create; and why? The right hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) drew attention this evening to the statement of the Prime Minister, that the laws made by the Imperial Parliament were not popular in Ireland, because of their foreign garb, and he added—and I quite agree with him—that the question was not one of the garb in which the laws came, but of the nature of the laws themselves. That argument was not open to the Prime Minister, because he is more responsible for the legislation of this Parliament with respect to Ireland during the last 17 years than any Member who has sat in the House of Commons. Take the Land Law, for instance. In his opinion, expressed in 1881, the Land Law, as it now stands, is purged from defects and from every taint of injustice; and last September he told his constituents that the grievances of the cultivator of the soil in Ireland have been happily removed. It was rather hard for the Attorney General last night to inform the right hon. Gentleman that the Act of 1881 had been absolutely marred, because, in passing it, the Irish Members were not consulted, and it was not brought into that complete harmony with their real wants and wishes which would have made it in every way satisfactory. It was still harder of the Chancellor of the Exchequer this evening to compare—as I thought somewhat impertinently—the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, to a tinker in legislation. ["No, no!"] I am afraid it is too true. I should not have ventured to make such a suggestion; but I could not gather anything else from the quotation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) that the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister has brought the Land Law of Ireland into a condition which cannot be maintained. What does he propose? He proposes a great measure of Land Purchase to be passed as inseparable from this Home Rule scheme by the Imperial Parliament. He will not trust the new statutory Parliament in Ireland with the property of the Irish landlords. Again, on the principles of religious equality, the right hon. Gentleman disestablished and disendowed the Irish Church. But he trusts the new Irish Parliament so little to maintain that principle, that he expressly prohibits it from establishing and endowing another church. Well, then, in these matters, the right hon. Gentleman distinctly showed his distrust of the instrument he is about to create. More than that, he has suggested those provisions for the protection of the minority, by the institution of a Special Order of Members returned on a special franchise, and for a special term of years, which I venture to say would have very little chance of surviving any real discussion in the House of Commons. But supposing such a check on the popular majority were instituted, what would it mean? Why, it would mean this—that whereas in past years the Imperial Parliament had felt it its duty, on those principles of right and wrong, which seemed advisable to English and Scotch minds, to protect the minority in Ireland, and on this account the laws passed by the Imperial Parliament had not met with the approval of the popular majority in Ireland, that now the right hon. Gentleman, while abolishing this power on the part of the Imperial Parliament, is going to substitute a provision to protect the minority of landlords, of Protestants, and of those having English connection, against whom the Home Rule movement is specially directed, which will be infinitely more galling to the Irish popular majority than could be the interference of the Imperial Parliament. I will venture to say, Sir, that if it were possible for this part of the measure to become law, a very short time indeed would elapse before the veto of this Order would be abolished, for the feeling of the popular majority in Ireland would swell so high against such a control, that they would come here with the almost unanswerable demand for the repeal of this security. Why, Sir, what do all these securities amount to? Just to this—that the history of the Transvaal Convention is about to be repeated. What was that Transvaal Convention? [An hon. MEMBER: Justice.] An hon. Member says it was justice; but it included certain safeguards and limitations for the benefit of English interests, of the minority of Loyalists in the Transvaal, and of our allies outside the Transvaal, with which the Convention was clothed, in order that it might be presented to Parliament. But as soon as it was put in operation, those safeguards and limitations proved to be almost valueless, except for this purpose—that they deceived the people of Great Britain and Ireland into accepting a proposal which they never would have agreed to if it had been presented to them in its naked ugliness. And so it is with all these safeguards. I do not believe for a moment that they can last. And why? Because, after all, the protection of the minority in Ireland is not a question so much of legislation as of administration. In the old times, in Grattan's Parliament, the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary for Ireland, as is well known, were not responsible to the Irish Parliament; they were English Administrators in Ireland. But what is to be the future administration in Ireland? The right hon. Gentleman said that "the principle of responsible government is freely and fully conceded by this measure." Well, then, I suppose the Viceroy of Ireland, like the Governor of a Colony, will have to act on the advice of his Ministers. They will be responsible to the Irish Parliament. On their advice he will have to decide upon the movement of the Military and Naval Forces of the Crown in Ireland. By their advice he will have to veto or give his assent to Bills passed by the Legislature in Ireland. On their advice he will have to appoint the Judges and the Magistrates of Ireland, from whose decision, so far as I know, there is to be no appeal to the Court here. And, again, in whose hands will the Constabulary be? "It is to be under the same authority as at present," said the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. What is that authority? Why, that of the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary. The Constabulary of Ireland, nominally reserved to the Imperial power, must then, I suppose, be really under the authority of Ministers responsible to the Irish Parliament. What does that mean? It means that we are asked to hand over to the majority of their fellow-countrymen in Ireland that minority whose great crime in the eyes of the majority is their faithfulness to the connection with England. I do not know—hon. Members do not know—whether Ulster is to be included in this Bill. [An hon. MEMBER: It is included.] I do not see how it could be excluded with a statutory Parliament established for Ireland. But if it were, what would that mean? I am afraid that it would mean the most terrible oppression of the small minority in the three Provinces of Ireland. ["No, no!"] I fear that, if Ulster were included, it would mean resistance to the authority of the Irish Government in Ulster. The Irish Government might not be squeamish in attemping to deal with that resistance; because, when the Attorney General enumerated last night all the Coercion Acts that had been passed for Ireland, he somehow forgot to remind the House that Grattan's Parliament, in the 18 years of its existence, passed no fewer than 22 Coercion Acts. But of this I am quite sure—that if the minority in the other three Provinces were subjected to oppression, or if there were armed resistance in Ulster, a feeling of sympathy would be awakened in Great Britain which would be irresistible. We should be asked again to assume our old and unpopular character of moderators between implacable enemies in Ireland, and the appeal for such assistance could not be refused without the gravest dereliction of our duty, or without assenting to that separation, which, as the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant has properly said, would be a disgrace to Great Britain and a disaster to Ireland. But what would it mean if Great Britain did intervene? It would mean that very employment of force that you will not have now; it would mean the employment of force against a hostile Irish Government, hostile Irish officials, and a hostile Irish police; it would mean interference in the affairs of a people, the majority of whom would despise us for the surrender we are now asked to make, and the minority of whom would distrust us for having deserted them. And what would this force be? The force would not be what you now call coercion, but it would be civil war. That is why I believe that this Bill would in no way be a final or real settlement of the question between England and Ireland. I feel that it is no real alternative to the policy of coercion which the Chancellor of the Exchequer declines to adopt. Coercion will come some day. ["No!"] Yes, it must, unless Ireland is to be separated from England. But when it does come, if it comes after the passing of such a measure as this, it will come in a shape that will by no means cause the future patriotic historian of Ireland to bless the right hon. Gentleman as the national benefactor that the hon. Member for the City of Cork now proclaims him to be. I am bound, Sir, to say that, as far as we are concerned, we adhere to the declaration which we placed in the mouth of Her Majesty in the most solemn way in our power at the beginning of the Session. We will not, at any time, or for any reason, disturb what, in spite of the dissent of the right hon. Gentleman, we believe to be a fundamental law of our Constitution—namely, the Legislative Union between England and Ireland. If it be necessary—as, I am sorry to say, it is too necessary in the present state of Ireland—to enforce the law and the authority of the Queen's Government, the law and the authority of the Queen's Government ought to be enforced at any cost. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant said it would be a very serious matter. It would have been a very serious matter even in January. It has not become less serious by the lapse of time, or by the Motion which the right hon. Gentleman has made for the introduction of this measure. But, Sir, such things have been done before, and done successfully, in Ireland. The National League is, undoubtedly, a dangerous and formidable Organization; but it is not more dangerous or formidable than was the Catholic Association for the Repeal of the Union in the time of Mr. O'Connell. Firmness and patience have conquered agaitation before, and they could do it again. There is nothing in the present or in any possible condition of Ireland that can warrant the step which the right hon. Gentleman asks us this evening to take, which I can only describe in words which he has himself used, almost with prophetic foresight, when he referred to Mr. Butt's proposals as the disintegration of the great capital institutions of the country for the purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the eyes of all mankind, and crippling any power we possess for the purpose of conferring benefits by legislation on the country to which we belong.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Mid Lothian): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will make at the outset one or two very brief remarks upon the speech of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach). He has quoted words from me with an extension given to them that they do not carry in the original document. The argument which I made upon the proposal of 1871 was this—that no case had at that time been made to justify any radical change in any of the institutions of the country generally, or any interference with the constitution of the Imperial Parliament; and I own that at that time, after the Church Act of 1869 and after the Land Act of 1870, I did cherish the hope that we might be able, by legislation from this House, to meet the wants and the wishes of Ireland. I cherished that hope at that time; but at that time, if the right hon. Gentleman has done me the justice to make himself completely acquainted with my sentiments expressed in that speech, he will find that it contains none of the apprehensions with which the minds of hon. Members opposite are filled, and that, on the contrary, I then stated in the most explicit manner that I had heard with joy, and accepted with the utmost satisfaction, the assurance that the demand which was beginning to be made by Mr. Butt for Home Rule did not involve in any way the disintegration of the Empire. But I certainly will not enter into a discussion of the Transvaal Convention, with regard to which I may make the observation that I think that the topics we have to deal with relevant to the matter are sufficient, and I do not consider that any observation from me is wanted on an act which I believe has been recognized by this country as a great act of justice, and as the undoing—perhaps that is the more accurate description of it—of the great act of injustice which stains the memory of our legislation on this subject.

The right hon. Gentleman says that I have shown mistrust of the Irish Legislature by providing safeguards for minorities. I have already stated, in the most distinct terms, that the safeguards provided, as far as I am concerned, are not in consequence of mistrust entertained by me, but they are in consequence of mistrust entertained by others. They are reasonable precautions, by way of contribution on our part, to disarm honest, though unfounded, jealousy, and however little it may appear that they are likely to attain their end, yet I cannot regret that we have made them. One more observation with respect to the foreign garb of English laws. The right hon. Gentleman must understand that I have used those words, not with respect to the beneficial Acts which have been done on many occasions by this Parliament for the purpose of meeting the wants of Ireland, but I used them with regard to the ordinary operations of the Criminal Law in that country, especially in association, as it has constantly been, with the provisions of special repressive or coercive legislation.

Lastly, I must express the astonishment with which I heard the right hon. Gentleman refer to the Roman Catholic Association. He spoke of the disappearance of that Association from the scene as a great triumph obtained by the vigour and firmness of the Government and the Parliament over unruly elements in Ireland. Why, Sir, on the contrary, the disappearance of the Roman Catholic Association was due entirely to the introduction of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, as, unhappily, the introduction of that Relief Bill was due, as the Duke of Wellington himself declared, to his apprehension of civil war, and as the alternative to prevent it. The right hon. Gentleman could not have afforded a more unhappy instance of that which has been a too common feature of the relations of this House to Ireland, and of those combinations the recurrence of which we are striving to avoid. I was told by my noble Friend the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington) that I had not a formulated demand from Ireland. No, Sir, but the Duke of Wellington had a pretty well formulated demand; and he knew, as we now know—and I am glad that the observations of the right hon. Gentleman gave the Irish Members below the Gangway an opportunity of bearing testimony—we now know in substance what is demanded by Ireland through her Constitutionally-chosen Representatives, and therefore I say, if it be a just and reasonable demand, we cannot hasten too soon to meet it; and we will not wait until the day of disaster, the day of difficulty, and I will add the day of dishonour, to yield, as we have so often yielded, to necessity that which we were unwilling to yield to justice.

Sir, I desire to avoid details in this stage of the debate, and at this hour of the night, and I will endeavour to make this sacrifice, at any rate, that I will neither defend myself nor censure anybody else; but I will deal as far as I can with some of the arguments that have recently been laid before us.

One detail I must notice which has been largely introduced into this debate, and in so striking a manner by many Members of the House—it is that which relates to the presence of Irish Members, or the cessation of that presence, at Westminster. Sir, when I spoke on Thursday last I laid down—and now I am going to answer an appeal of the right hon. Gentleman who asked me what were the essential conditions of this Bill—I laid down, I say, five essential conditions, from which it appeared to me we could under no circumstances depart, and under which the grant of a domestic Legislature to Ireland would be justifiable and wise. These were the essential conditions under which, in our opinion, the granting of a domestic Legislature to Ireland would be justifiable and wise—first, that it must be consistent with Imperial unity; secondly, that it must be founded upon the political equality of the three nations; thirdly, that there must be an equitable distribution of Imperial burdens; fourthly, that there should be safeguards for the minority; and, fifthly, that it should be in the nature of a settlement, and not of a mere provocation to the revival of fresh demands. I stated that these were the only conditions.

I find that I have been reported as having stated that the retention of Customs and Excise by this country, and the absence of Irish Members from this House, were likewise vital and essential conditions. I do not think I used those epithets. If I did, it was probably an inadvertance, for which I apologize; and, unquestionably, it was in entire contradiction to what I had just stated before, when I laid down the only essential conditions. Sir, what I think with regard to the Irish Members—although the question is much too large for me to attempt to enter fully into it at present—what I thought clear with regard to the Irish Members was, in the first place, this—that the 103 Irish Members could not possibly continue, as now, to come here and vote upon all matters—English, Scotch, Irish, and Imperial alike. That I conceived to be wholly indisputable. I stated that I had hoped—that I had long tried to find—some practicable means of distinction between Imperial and British matters, and that my efforts had entirely failed, nor could I see my way to such a distinction. I also stated that, in my opinion, it was impossible for England, and that no doubt England would never desire or dream of inflicting or forcing upon Ireland taxation without representation; that if Irish Members were to disappear either permanently or for a time—I do not say I used these epithets—if they were to disappear from this House, it must be by the consent of Ireland herself.

Since that time a variety of suggestions have been made in many speeches, which have shown how much interest is felt in this question. It has been suggested that Irish Members might come here with limited powers. But I have certainly failed to discover the means of drawing the line. It has been stated that they might come in limited numbers; and it has been suggested, in a wise and weighty speech delivered by my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) last night—that an interval of absence from this House was eminently desirable, and perhaps almost of vital necessity for Ireland herself, with a view to her own purposes. Then, says my hon. Friend, if I understood him right, after such an interval of years has passed, during which, God knows, there will be enough to do for any Parliament—any Representative Body that Ireland can be supplied with—after such an interval, if it is desired that Irish Members in any number, or any proportion, or under any conditions, should re-appear in this House, that is a problem which, however difficult, British statesmanship may be found adequate to solve. There was great force in what my hon. Friend said. I cannot, however, bind myself with regard to these observations, or to any of the propositions which I have just cited. I cannot bind myself, still less any of my Colleagues; but I think, bearing in mind the importance of the subject and the vast and immeasurable importance of the purposes we have in view, I do not think we should be right—it would be even presumptuous—were we to take upon ourselves, in the face of the House, at this early stage of the discussion on the Bill, entirely to close the door against any consideration of this kind.

The position, therefore, remains exactly as it was; but I have thought that that reference which I have made to that portion of the speech of my hon. Friend is no more than that, and other portions of that speech, eminently deserve.

Now, Sir, my right hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) has addressed the House very fully to-night, and has raised a great number of questions connected with this Bill. My right hon. Friend is terribly alarmed at the argument drawn from the presence of 86 Nationalist Members, 85 of them from Ireland, in this Parliament. He is perfectly alarmed at this argument. I do not know whether he did me the honour to refer to my view of it. If he did, he is entirely mistaken. He treated it as if a statement had been made by me to the effect that, because there are 85 Nationalist Members in this House, you must do whatever they demand; and, treating it in that way and having created this phantom, it is easy enough to show that it is a most formidable proposition. He spent a long time in showing the most portentous consequences to which it would lead. Yes, Sir; but that is not the argument so far as I used it; it was not the argument so far as I have heard it. What I ventured to say was this—that the deliberate and Constitutional expression of the wishes of Ireland through the vast majority of her Members entails upon this House the duty and the obligation of a respectful and a favourable consideration of every wish that Ireland may entertain, consistently with the interests and the integrity of the Empire. My right hon. Friend said there was a parity in principle between Ireland and Scotland. I entirely agree with him. His experience as a Scotch Member is short. If the vast majority of Scotchmen demand something on the ground that Scotch feeling and opinion show that it is essentially required in order to satisfy the just wishes of Scotland, I would advise my right hon. Friend, if he wishes to be consistent with regard to the integrity of the Empire, not to put himself in conflict with those expressions of opinion.

Then, Sir, my right hon. Friend said that no analogy could be drawn—and so said my noble Friend the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington)—from the proceedings of the Protestant Parliament of Grattan. What was the meaning of all this? I have been arguing, and others have argued, that Grattan's Parliament showed no tendency and no disposition towards a separation of the Kingdoms, and that Grattan himself looked upon the separation of the Parliaments as a means of uniting the hearts of the people. That has been met by the statement now that that Parliament was a Protestant Parliament and a landlords' Parliament. Sir, if that is the way to make a Parliament safe and sound, if to re-introduce religious disabilities, if to narrow the franchise, if to centre power in the hands of the landlords, or if you are to go further, and fill more than half the Benches of Parliament with pensioners and placemen, then, if these are the elements of safety in a Parliament, in what gross and woeful error have we been in this Parliament for half a century. We have been breaking down the exclusive power of class; we have been widening the franchise over the whole Kingdom, and effacing from the Statute Book one by one—until the very last, perhaps, is contained in this Bill—every vestige of religious disability. There is no faith in the people with those who make these declarations. Their faith seems to be in shutting out the people, and in regarding popular influence as a source of danger. In this happy country we have found it a source of strength; and the enterprize we are now engaged in is to see whether we cannot also find security for it in Ireland, that it shall be to her a similar source of strength under circumstances happier than those of her history heretofore.

My right hon. Friend seems to sum up the misdeeds of the Irish people in an emphatic question—"In what country, except Ireland, would a 'No Rent' Manifesto have been produced?" That is the inquiry which he puts. My first observation upon it is this—in what country, except Ireland, can you show so lamentable, so deplorable, a history—a history so disgraceful to those who had any hand in bringing it about—and relations so deplorable between those pied it? The speech of my right hon. who owned the land and those who occu- Friend appeared to proceed upon the assumption that there were ineradicable and incurable vices in Irishmen, which placed them in a category different from the people of other nations—that they had a sort of double dose of original sin. Is it to be wondered at that the notions of Irishmen should, to some extent, be gone awry upon the subject of land and the relations connected with it when you bear in mind that the Devon Commission, appointed by a Tory Government, reported that the agricultural population of Ireland were called upon to bear, and that they did bear, with admirable and exemplary patience, sufferings greater than those which fell to the lot of any other people in Europe? Are you so ignorant as to suppose, when these sufferings had been borne for generations, I may say for centuries, as disclosed to the world on the highest authority, and when attempt after attempt to apply something like a remedy to the miseries that existed from the operation of the Land Laws in Ireland had failed through the narrow jealousy and selfishness of a class—that these things could pass without leaving a mark in history? Does my right hon. Friend think that these things can pass and set their mark upon history, and yet leave no mark in the nature and disposition and habits of men who have been sufferers under such abominations?

My right hon. Friend thinks my analogy with foreign countries is bad; that Austria and Hungary, Norway and Sweden have nothing to do with these things. But my statement has been entirely misapprehended. I will recall the terms of it for the benefit of the right hon. Gentleman. I never said that the analogy was exact, that the circumstances were exactly parallel. What I said was that the circumstances were such as would show that we are called upon in this country to do, with infinitely greater advantages, what they have done in the face of infinitely greater difficulties. My right hon. Friend appears to think it a difficulty in our way that we have got an Imperial Parliament and a greater number of subordinate local Parliaments related to the British Empire. My point is that there is not in Sweden a supremacy of the Swedish Parliament over Norway; that there is not in Austria a supremacy of the Austrian Parliament over Hungary; and that, even without the advantage of such supremacy, the problem has in those countries been solved in substance; and that, in the case of Norway and Sweden particularly, by the adoption of the simple expedient of granting a domestic Legislature and practical local independence, the union of the two countries, which at one time seemed hopeless and impossible, has become close, and is growing closer from day to day. Then, how is it that these illustrations have no bearing upon the great problem that we have before us?

Again, my right hon. Friend states, as a difficulty, that our interests are so interlaced with Ireland. I am astonished to hear that observation called upon to pass muster and do duty among the arguments against this Bill. Why, if our interests are so interlaced—and I thank God it is true that they are so interlaced—is not that, in itself, a strong presumption of the extreme unlikelihood that Irishmen will overlook that interlacing, and proceed as if we were perfectly independent, as if they had nothing to do with us, no benefit to derive from us, and no injury to suffer from injury to us? No; the truth is this. It is assumed—and this is the basis of the speech of my right hon. Friend—that the Irishman will do wrong, and that there is no way of making him listen to the dictates of prudence, of kindness, of justice, of good sense, except by taking into your own hands the reins by which you can govern him and teaching him how he shall walk. On that principle it is that my right hon. Friend went over all the different classes of subjects, and described the dreadful changes that everything was to undergo. Legislation was to be changed, administration was to be changed, the Civil Service was to be changed, the face of nature itself was to be changed. Such is the terrible picture. And why? Is there no common sense among that portion of our fellow-countrymen?

The speech of my right hon. Friend recalled to my memory a striking sentence of Lord Russell's, 50 years ago, which implanted itself deeply on my memory at the time, which I have never forgotten, and I hope never shall forget. It was at the time when, under the Administration of the Melbourne Government, Mr. Thomas Drummond was Under Secretary for Ireland, and when, with singular success, he was endeavouring to conduct the Irish Administration, so far as he could, in sympathy with the feelings of the people. His misdeeds, as I suppose I must call them, found their climax in the utterance of the portentous doctrine which shocked Conservatism from Land's End to John o' Groats—he had the audacity to say that "property had its duties as well as its rights." The corresponding misdeeds of Mr. Drummond, and in some sense of the Lord Lieutenant, caused many debates in this House, in which I am thankful to say I took no part, but to which I was an attentive listener. Every sort of objection and accusation was brought forward against the proceedings of the Irish Government of that day; and Lord Russell, in his quiet way, rising to take part in a debate, said—"It appears to me that all these objections, all these difficulties, and all these accusations"—I may not be quoting every word accurately, but I am very near the mark—"may be summed up in one single sentence. It comes, Sir, to this—that as England is inhabited by Englishmen and Scotland by Scotchmen, so Ireland is inhabited by Irishmen." Lord Russell knew very well that Irishmen did not come here to conquer us 700 years ago, but that we went to Ireland to conquer—we favoured Irishmen with our company; we have been all along the stronger party of the two; and it is one of the uniform and unfailing rules that guide human judgment, if not of the moment, yet of history, that when a long relation has existed between a nation of superior strength and one of inferior strength, and when that relation has gone wrong, the responsibility and the guilt rests, in the main, upon the strong rather than upon the weak.

My right hon. Friend asked me questions as to the provisions of this Bill; and I must confess my surprise at some of them, coming, as they do, from one who is an old official hand. They were questions most proper to be asked—perhaps on the second reading of a Bill—certainly in Committee; but I have never heard of such questions upon the Motion for leave to introduce a Bill. If questions of that kind are to be asked, why, Sir, this House ought to alter its Rules, and give an hon. Member applying for leave to introduce a Bill the power of laying it upon the Table of the House before it is read a first time. For example, my right hon. Friend asked a question about the veto. Well, Sir, we have stated with regard to that point that there is no limitation to the veto in the Bill; and if the right hon. Gentleman asks my opinion, my opinion is the principle upon which the veto is now worked—if the right hon. Gentleman will take the trouble to read the valuable work of Professor Dicey, to which I have before referred, he will find a most careful and interesting elucidation of the subject—the principle upon which the veto is now worked in the great Colonial Dependencies of this country, though I do not admit that Ireland will be reduced to the status of a Colony, I believe that principle to be applicable, for all practical purposes, to Ireland with a domestic Legislature.

Then my right hon. Friend asked a question about the levying of the income tax. He did not seem to have even a very elementary idea of what the Irish income tax would be, and he asked where the dividends would be payable—whether they would be payable in London or in Dublin? Why, Sir, no such questions can possibly arise under this Bill as the Bill stands. The Irish income tax will be just as distinct from the income tax of England and Scotland as if it were a French income tax. Well, I will give you another illustration—as if it were an Indian income tax. From time to time they have in India the blessing of an income tax; but in India the whole machinery and incidence of the tax, the liability to pay it, are all as totally distinct from the tax in this country as if the income tax there were laid in another planet.

My right hon. Friend finally laid very much stress on the case of the United States of America. He pointed out that insidious advisers recommended the Northern States not to insist upon the maintenance of the Union, but that they did insist on the maintenance of the Union, and carried their point. Why, true, Sir; but, having carried their point, what did they do? Having the Southern States at their feet, being in a position in which they were entitled to treat them as conquered countries, they invested every one of them with that full autonomy, a measure of which we are now asking for Ireland. I say a measure of which autonomy, because I believe that their autonomy is much fuller than that for which we are now asking for Ireland.

Well, Sir, I may say some words more. My right hon. Friend said—I am not quite sure whether my right hon. Friend said so, but certainly my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) did—that these enactments, if carried, would lead to further demands from Ireland. That is a favourite objection. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) has been extremely cautious in this matter, and he has promised Ireland—I hope I am not misrepresenting him—almost nothing, except a reasonable allowance of repressive criminal legislation. The phantom of local government and a little control over education and public works, and such things, find no place whatever in the speech of the Leader of the Opposition; but they find a place in the speech of my right hon. Friend behind me, and of my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale. Well, Sir, we are going to give to the Irish people, if we are permitted, that which we believe to be in substantial accordance with their full, possible, and reasonable demands. In our opinion, that is the way to stop further demands.

I should like to quote Mr. Burke—and I hope we shall hear much of Mr. Burke in the course of this discussion—for the writings of Mr. Burke upon Ireland, and still more upon America, are a mine of gold for the political wisdom with which they are charged, applicable to the circumstances of to-day, and full of the deepest and most valuable lessons to guide the policy of a country. He was speaking for conciliation with America, and those to whom he was preaching in vain met him with this idle cavil—that his conciliation would tend to further demands. They refused this conciliation; but further demands came, and they were granted—with hands dyed in blood, and after hundreds of millions had been added to our National Debt, and when disparagement, at the very least, of England's fame went through the length and breadth of the world in connection with that wretched consummation—were granted, leaving behind them in America an inheritance, not of goodwill or affection such as now prevails, but of rancour and resentment which for generations were not effaced, and which were the happy consequences of a courageous resistance. I am not afraid, Sir, of the same consequences in the same form. There is no question of war with Ireland; but it is a question of what I care for more than anything else—the character, the honour, and the fair fame of my country; it is a question of humanity, of justice, and of a desire to make atonement for a long—a too long—series of former, and not yet wholly forgotten, wrongs. Now, Sir, what did Mr. Burke say on that occasion when he was advocating conciliation with America? He said that the more and the better state of liberty any people possessed, the less would they hazard in the vain attempt to make it more.

What are the proposals of my noble Friend? They are—First, a little dose of coercion, and next a grudging gift to Ireland of such a self-government as England and Scotland may be pleased to choose for themselves. Now, I deny the justice of the principle that self-government in Ireland is necessarily to be limited by the wishes of England and Scotland for themselves. Upon what basis of justice does that argument rest? Why may not Ireland have specialities in her case which England and Scotland may not have? We have no right to say that what England wants and Scotland wants Ireland may have, but nothing else. You must show that what Ireland wants is mischievous before you are justified in refusing her. I am speaking now of the favourite topic of "further demands." Was there ever a device more certain to prolong all the troubles of Parliament; was there ever a system of policy less hopeful of attaining any solid or permanent standing ground than this proposal to dole out to Ireland from year to year, with grudging and misgiving, and with the frank statement that it is a dangerous business, that which she does not want, and which, if she accepts at all, she will only accept for the purpose of making further demands? It was denied, in very clear language by the Irish Representatives, that they sought to press forward from this measure to other measures. They claim—and very fairly and reasonably claim—because no Member of Parliament can divest himself of the right—to examine in Committee the provisions of the Bill, and to demand this or that Amendment. But they have expressly disclaimed the intention to make what my noble Friend calls "further demands." Let him put to them the same question, and ask them for the same assurances as to the proposals made in this debate by a most distinguished person—one who, unfortunately, I know only three years ago declared that there should be no extension of local government until the Irish Members made a total change in their methods of speech and action. No doubt measures doled out in the shape of Municipal Corporations here and there would be certain to be used for the purpose of making further demands. I commend the consistency and caution of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, because he fairly told us at the commencement of the Session, when he was asked what boons would be given to Ireland in the way of local government, that no enlargement of the powers of local government should be given which might be used as a lever to weaken and destroy the Legislative Union, or—as he went on to say—enable the political majority to tyrannize over the minority. A very sensible, a very consistent course. If you grant some small modicum of local government, it would simply be a device securing perpetual disturbance of this Parliament from year to year by Irish Members, and they would strengthen the leverage with which they would use those demands and advance them to their natural consummation.

My noble Friend complains that this is a question which has not been referred to the people. I should like to know what is the upshot of that observation? What does it mean? I think it can hardly mean anything else than this—that the Government had committed a fault in bringing forward this question at the present time, because it had not been brought the matter under public consideration at the General Election. It seems to me that that is an extraordinary doctrine. I want to know where it is to be found laid down by any Constitutional authority? My hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) asked whether there was any mandate for coercion? No, Sir. There was no mandate for coercion, and you cannot want a mandate for any measures necessary to maintain the law. Very well, Sir; but if you do not want a mandate for measures of force and repression, intended to maintain the law, much less do you want a mandate for measures intended to maintain and strengthen the law by laying hold of the hearts of the people, and which aim at no force and no repression, but at an union far closer and more durable than that which now exists on the Statute Book.

I do not know whether my noble Friend has given much attention to the case of the Reform Act; but it is a rather curious one from this point of view. The Election of 1830 was conducted almost entirely without reference to the subject of Reform. At that time the Election extended over very many weeks, and it was only just before it had quite finished—and the Yorkshire Election, if I recollect rightly, was about the last—that those great events occurred in Paris which produced a sympathetic effect here, and roused a cry for Reform in England; but, in the main, the Parliament was elected without the least reference to Reform. Yes, Sir; but when that Parliament met, and when it was found that the wants of the country required Reform, although it was denounced as revolution—and I can assure hon. Gentlemen opposite that all their invectives are weak and ineffective in comparison—Parliament set about its work manfully; the Government proposed to Parliament, and Parliament entertained, the great proposal then laid before it. It would be a very different thing indeed if my Colleagues who have spoken in the debate had evaded the real issue, or had declared that the question was unfit to come before us. I never uttered an opinion, nor shall I utter an opinion, that it is a subject unfit to come before the people. I think we who propose this Bill should be the last persons who should be jealous of any reference to the people.

Coming now to the proposals of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), in the first place let me say that I accord at once to him—what, however, he cannot want according from me—that is, his perfect and entire good faith in the representations that he made, upon which a misapprehension prevailed between us, as to his title to enter upon certain matters. If anything further is required upon that point, it certainly can keep until Friday next, when the Bill on the Land Question is brought farward. Quite irrespective of the Land Law, my right hon. Friend stated four points, any one of which was an ample justification of the step which he felt himself called upon to take. But he, at any rate, gave no countenance to coercive legislation. He looks into the future, and he sees how light and trivial is the talk about coercive legislation. But my right hon. Friend went a great deal further, and suggested a Royal Commission or Committee, to be formed of all Parties, to deal with this subject. I will not criticize that proposal. I venture the opinion that no solution of the question will ever proceed from a Royal Commission or a Committee composed of all Parties, much less pass through Parliament. Then my right hon. Friend spoke of federation. If you are to have federation, there must be somebody to federate, and there will be nobody except a Legislative Body entitled to act for the people. It appears to me that my right hon. Friend goes further than we do, because he is in favour of not only giving a domestic Legislature, but of appending to it that rather formidable postscript of some arrangement under which this Parliament is to part with some of its powers, and throw them into the common stock along with powers coming from other portions of the Empire. I cannot say, therefore, that he has remained behind us in this matter.

What is really material to observe is the mutual relations of harmony and concord subsisting between the plans of those who think they ought to sink differences, and unite together for the purpose of finding a solution for the Irish problem. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt), in his masterly statement, exhibited in full detail the relations actually subsisting among those most distinguished Gentlemen and great Parliamentary authorities. He has shown that the Border Burghs does not agree with Birmingham; that Birmingham does not agree with Rossendale; that Rossendale does not agree with Paddington; and that Edinburgh, again, is distinct in shade from them all. There is a decided want of common feature, common action, common purpose, common principle. There is no united basis of action except the basis of hostility to this Bill.

Well, Sir, when I speak of this plan I speak of it as a plan in its essence, and not in its detail. It may derive much advantage from the wisdom of Parliament. It has been produced and brought to light under a degree of pressure such as, I believe, never was applied by circumstances to any Government, such, at least I will venture to say, as there is no case of in the half-century to which my recollection extends. It may be improved by the wisdom of this House; but, speaking of it as a plan, I say it holds the field. It has many enemies; it has not a single rival. No one has been bold enough to propose an intelligible system of what, in my opening statement, I called effectual coercion—the only kind of coercion that can be adequate to the end you have in view. And, Sir, as the plan holds the field, the subject holds the field. Never, I think, have I witnessed such signs of public absorption in this House and out of this House and, Sir, it is safe to prophesy that the subject will continue to hold the field. Many who are here advocate important reforms, many think—and I am one of them—that legislation is in arrear. The demands upon your time and thought are beyond your capacity, even with your best exertions to meet. But, Sir, you may dismiss all these subjects from your mind until this matter is disposed of, until the Irish problem is solved. I am not speaking of what Gentlemen opposite may threaten or may say; I am looking at the nature of the case; I am looking at the profound interest of the whole English and Scotch people, aye, and of the whole civilized world. Until this problem is solved it is idle to think of making real progress with the Business of this country in respect to the important subjects which are perfectly ripe for the handling of Parliament. We have come, Sir, to the time for decisive action; we have come to the time for throwing aside, not only private interests and partial affections, but private devices and partial remedies. We have come to the time for looking at the whole breadth of this subject and endeavouring to compass it in our minds. We have come to the time when we must answer this question—whether we will make one bold attempt to free Parliament for its great and necessary work, and to establish harmony by Irish laws for Ireland; or whether we will, on the other hand, continue to struggle on as we have done before, living from hand to mouth, leaving England and Scotland to a famine of needful and useful legislation, and Ireland to a continuance of social disease, the depth of which we have never understated, of social disease that you do not know how to deal with, and of angry discord with Great Britain which you make no attempt to cure.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. Attorney General.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 181.]

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the date for the second reading?

Mr. GLADSTONE: I assume, Sir, that we shall meet again, after the Easter Recess, upon Monday, the 3rd of May, and read this Bill a second time on Thursday, the 6th of May.

POLICE FORCES ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—[Bill 3.]

(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord Claud Hamilton, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Mr. Cowen, Sir George Russell, Lord Charles Beresford, Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I do not wish to offer any further opposition, and I would advise my hon. Friends to withdraw their opposition to the admission of the police to the franchise, provided the Government agree that no officers shall vote who only occupy Government premises; if, for instance, some hon. Gentleman who is responsible for the Government will undertake to insert in the Bill a provision to the effect that—

> "No officer or public servant shall be entitled to vote by reason only of the occupation of Government premises."

It seems to me very unreasonable that the occupation of Government premises ought to entitle a man to the franchise. I do not wish to continue any opposition to the Police Force as such, and I only oppose this Bill upon particular grounds. I think the offer I make is a very reasonable one, and I trust it will be accepted by the Government.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I am not quite certain whether I followed the proposition of the hon. and learned Gentleman. There was a good deal of conversation in the House while he was speaking, and it was with difficulty I heard his remarks. I understood him to say—he will, I hope, correct me if I have not understood him aright—under the service franchise which was created last year a person was allowed to vote who occupied a whole room himself in public buildings like barracks. There certainly was great doubt whether the Act of last year was intended to apply to soldiers occupying single rooms in barracks. After considerable discussion, before different Revising Barristers, a test case was carried to the Superior Courts; and it was there decided that a soldier, whether he was an officer, a non-commissioned officer, or a private, who occupied a whole room in barracks, was entitled to the franchise, and that decision is now held to be the law of the land—at least, it has not been appealed against. I do not understand the hon. and learned Gentleman to propose to alter the law in respect to the service franchise generally, but to propose to alter it in so far as it applies to the Royal Irish Constabulary. If effect were given to the hon. and learned Gentleman's wishes the state of things would be this—that whereas, in England, the soldier or the policeman occupying a room in barracks would be entitled under the service franchise to the franchise, a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary, whether officer or private, occupying a room in barracks, would be disqualified. Do I understand the hon. and learned Member correctly? [Mr. T. M. HEALY assented.] Well, Sir, if that is the case, it will be impossible for us to assent to exclude specifically a member of one particular body, half military and half police, from the privilege which the soldier has, and which the policeman in this country has. I do not see how, logically or reasonably, it would be possible to accept the Amendment. I do not think that the law in respect of the service franchise is in a very satisfactory state; the law is open to considerable question, and I know that is the opinion of a good many officers commanding regiments. They very much doubt whether the efficiency of their regiments has been improved by the very peculiar form the service franchise has taken; but I do not think it would be a wise thing to say to a man—"If you are a soldier, officer or private, occupying a separate room, you may have the privilege of voting; if you are a policeman, officer or private, occupying a separate room, you may have the privilege of voting; but if you are a member of the Irish Constabulary this privilege shall be denied you." If I have correctly understood the hon. and learned Member, I do not think it is possible to accept the Amendment.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I was very glad to hear the conclusion at which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Childers) arrived. There is, however, one point which he has not mentioned, and which, I think, the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) will admit is an argument against his Amendment. In Ireland the Constabulary live in barracks which are Government property; but in England—in my own county, at any rate—some of the police also live in barracks, which are county property. I could conceive no reason whatever for disfranchising constables who live in barracks which are Government property, and enfranchising police who live in English barracks which are county property. I am not very favourable to this Bill; but I hope it will be allowed, at any rate, that the position of the Irish Constabulary and the English police shall be the same in this respect.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Perhaps I may be allowed to explain. It will be in the recollection of the Committee that we agreed to the second reading of this Bill on the understanding that it should not apply to the Royal Irish Constabulary. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) is, perhaps, unaware of that fact. What I now propose to do is to make a still further concession to the right hon. Baronet in charge of the Bill (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson), and to the Police Force generally. It may not be known to the right hon. Baronet (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) that the right hon. Baronet in charge of the Bill is willing to leave out of the Bill entirely the Royal Irish Constabulary; and what I propose is that they shall not be omitted, but that no person residing in Government premises shall enjoy the franchise by reason only of such residence. Under my Amendment any married constable living out of barracks, or any constable living in lodgings, will be able to enjoy the franchise. I do not wish to keep the right hon. Baronet (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) to the pledge he gave upon the second reading, providing the Government will accept the alteration in the more modified form I suggest. That will enable the Bill to be passed in its entirety, as it has been very generally approved; and, at the same time, it will relieve us of the suggestion that we are disinclined to allow them a vote. If the Bill passes with my Amendment the Government can do no harm whatever. What I propose is to relieve the Government of any suspicion whatever of drafting a force of policemen down to a certain district at election times, and thereby upsetting the ordinary balance of Parties. If the right hon. Member in charge of the Bill will not accept my Amendment we must ask him to fulfil his pledge to us, and to insert a clause to exclude the Royal Irish Constabulary.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): The hon. and learned Member must remember that a constable will have no right whatever to vote unless he has the recognized qualification of residence. The hon. and learned Member also said that he objected to policemen, soldiers, and everybody of that kind having this power. Well, if that is his opinion, the proper time for him to deal with the subject will be upon a general question of franchise, and not upon a small measure such as this.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): It ought to be the duty of this House to make the franchise as real as possible, and I submit that it ought to be their duty to see that the claims of people such as these are founded upon fact. It is within my knowledge that a large proportion of the claims made by the military were false claims, and that it is impossible to ascertain whether the claims are *bonâ fide* or not. When any change of quarters of a regiment has taken place, before the men have been in a place a fortnight, many of them have been placed on the list as entitled to the vote. I submit to the right hon. Gentleman that that is an occurrence which ought to be dealt with.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): I submit that the arguments which have been put forward by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Derry (Mr. T. M. Healy) are perfectly reasonable. Prior to this year, neither the police nor the military could claim the franchise on behalf of the building in which they lived. That is beyond question, and it is surely beyond question also that on the passing of the Reform Act it was never contemplated that the franchise should be conferred either on the military or the police residing in barracks. I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the law has not been settled on that point; but the ruling has been given by the Revising Barristers that the military have a right to the franchise under those circumstances, and my contention is that if the law does confer the right it was never intended to do so. If the matter had been expressly brought before the House at the time, I think it is beyond question that it would not have been permitted that that state of the law should exist. What I submit to the Committee is this —here is a change in the law which has been made inadvertently in regard to the military, but which has not been made in regard to the police; and it is no argument to say that it should be made for the police because it was accidentally conferred upon the military. All we ask is this—that policemen shall not get the franchise by virtue of the occupation of Government buildings. We do not ask that constables occupying separate dwellings shall be deprived of the franchise. All we want is that where they live in barracks they shall not get the franchise by virtue of occupying single rooms in those barracks.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): I think, Sir, that there is some slight mistake on the part of the hon. Member who has just sat down, because the Franchise Act only gave the franchise to the soldier occupying a separate dwelling. With regard to the particular case of the Royal Irish Constabulary, I think that principle is clearly laid down in this Bill, and that the number who would be entitled to the franchise will be comparatively small A great many of them live in barracks, and very few of them will be in possession of such complete control over their own part of the barracks as to entitle them to vote.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I am willing to withdraw my opposition, and I would point out that I never opposed the extension of the franchise to the police. My point is this—that if you once extend the franchise to persons residing in barracks, you must have some complete arrangements for taking the registration of such persons. An officer might put the whole regiment on the list if we have no checks. For every challenge we are fined 2*s*. 6*d*., which would be a serious thing in the case of a whole regiment; and what I say is that if you admit these people to the franchise you should have some complete method of revision. I contend that with regard to this service franchise that we have not the same safeguards that we have in regard to the ordinary public. We cannot go into the barracks and ascertain where a certain man was at certain times, and I do say that adequate safeguards ought to be provided.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): It is not a question as to whether the police or the soldier shall have the service franchise, or whether something more should not be done to provide that the public shall have some better means of knowing that the franchise is properly exercised. The hon. and learned Member is perfectly right in saying that the objector has not access to the interior of the barracks, and no doubt difficulties arise in that respect; but I have promised that we will bring in a Bill dealing with registration during the present Session, and I have undertaken that this point will be regarded. I do not think, therefore, that we should be justified in excluding these constables in consequence of the difficulties that have been mentioned.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I wish to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to a very great practical danger which exists in connection with this subject. I will take a case which actually did happen. In the constituency of South Dublin there were 200 soldiers stationed at Portobello Barracks. The election took place, I believe, in November. It has been stated that in the ordinary course these 200 men would have had their station changed, and been removed out of the Kingdom about a week before the election; but, strange to say, they were not removed, and every one of them voted. It was absolutely impossible to obtain any information with regard to them; but it is certainly difficult to imagine that each of them had a separate room to himself in the barracks. This doctrine that soldiers should exercise the rights of citizenship by virtue of the occupation of Government property is certainly an entirely new doctrine. For instance, the right does not depend, in any respect, upon the lodger franchise. Although I do not for a moment declare that a soldier is unfit to enjoy the franchise, I maintain that it is not desirable that he should obtain a vote on account of the occupation of Government premises. It is quite certain that he can have no freehold franchise in connection with a barrack, or any leasehold franchise, and he does not enjoy a £12 occupation franchise. I believe there is at this moment an Act on the Statute Book which provides that a soldier who is possessed of the franchise shall be permitted to be absent on furlough for the purpose of recording his vote; but in all other cases he is confined to barracks during an election. Why should a soldier have greater privileges than a police officer? Yet a police officer, even permanently attached to a station, has not the privilege of the vote conferred upon him, and this extraordinary result has happened—that the soldier gets the franchise which, up to the present moment, has been denied to the police. The fact that this inequality has been created *per incuriam* by the Act of 1884 certainly binds the two forces together with sufficient closeness to entitle the Committee to discuss the question now. What was it that happened when the Bill came on for a second reading? Hon. Members on these Benches offered a strenuous opposition to the extension of the franchise to members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, not as citizens, but in their capacity as the occupiers or residents of Government buildings. I believe I am not going too far when I say that a promise, perhaps not clearly expressed, but understood by both Parties, was made by some of the Gentlemen sitting on the Front Opposition Bench that this provision in regard to the Constabulary of Ireland should not be pressed. Of course, it would be impossible to remove the names which have already found their way upon the list. The case made was that if the liberty were given in the first instance it might be restricted afterwards by the provisions of a Registration Bill. But a Registration Bill has not been introduced, and has not been discussed by the House; and, therefore, I am unable to say whether it will ever be reached. I think, therefore, that the best policy is not to give a dangerous liberty until we have also provided a proper safeguard. That policy has already been followed this evening on a matter of much more serious importance, and I trust that it will be followed now.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I think the Committee might fairly accept the proposal which has been made by the Government. It has always been admitted that the Government are prepared to deal with the matter in a future Bill; but my apprehension has reference to what may happen to it in "another place." A Bill of this kind will certainly pass in the House of Lords; but I am by no means so sure that the provisions of a Registration Bill would pass. But after we have had, at any rate, a fair offer from the Home Secretary, I think it would be a mistake to push the matter any further. I will simply ask the right hon. Gentleman if in the Registration Bill he will be prepared to deal with the matter?

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I said, some days ago, that I certainly would do so.

Dr. J. E. KENNY (Cork, S.): I would suggest that the Government should undertake to suspend the action of the Bill until the Registration Bill is brought on, so that both may go on simultaneously. The question would then be one of detail. I do not think that any inconvenience would be sustained if the Bill did not come into operation until better registration machinery is provided.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I should like to draw attention to the fact that this Bill might be made the foundation, after a time, of an alteration in the service franchise. I would point out to the Committee that the service franchise, as it is now extended to the police, is far wider than the service franchise applied to ordinary citizens. In the case of the service franchise in civilian life, a servant is only entitled to exercise the franchise when the master does not reside on the premises with him, and only one servant can exercise the franchise out of the same building. [*Cries of* "No!"] That is certainly the practice in Ireland; and only one servant is recognized as the person entitled to vote by virtue of the service franchise. If an alteration such as that proposed by the Bill is carried out, I submit that it will hereafter be made the foundation of a claim to the service franchise for all the servants any gentleman may have. If we pass this Bill in the shape in which it now stands, we shall certainly be giving encouragement to such a demand.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): The last time this proposition was before the House I offered a strenuous opposition to it, because I entertain a very strong belief that it is undesirable the Irish Constabulary should exercise the franchise. As, however, we have much more important subjects to engage our attention, and seeing that we are on the eve of a happier state of things, I have no desire to persist in the opposition I have offered to the enfranchisement of some 13,000 police constables. I agree with my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) that we may now fairly accept the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, and allow the Bill to pass in its present shape on the understanding which has been arrived at.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): I have only just entered the House, and I do not know the exact stage which the Bill has reached; but I shall certainly oppose, by every means in my power, the enfranchisement of the Irish police under the present system.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 70; Noes 53: Majority 17.—(Div. List, No. 70.)

Clause 2.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): I think the division just taken shows the enormous amount of forcing necessary to get this Bill through, and at this hour of the morning I do not think there is any reason why we should go farther with it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. W. O'Brien.*)

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): I trust the Committee will not assent to the Motion. Although the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken represents a number of hon. Members who think that the discussion ought not to be continued at this hour, yet it seems that a very large number of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway have practically assented to the passing of this measure on the assurance given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers). Therefore, under the circumstances, I put it to the hon. Member not to persist with his Motion for Progress.

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): I think we have some reason to complain of the way in which the right hon. Baronet has treated us in reference to the course of this Bill. We were distinctly promised, on the second reading, that the Royal Irish Constabulary would be excluded from the operation of this Bill. ["No, no!"] That is, at all events, my understanding of what took place; and if it had not been so, it was in our power, and it certainly would have been our duty, to have blocked the Bill, and so prevented its coming on for discussion. However, the right hon. Baronet has got the Bill into Committee, and he now tells us that he cannot meet us in the direction of the promise made during the discussion on the Motion for the second reading; and I do not see how we can be asked to proceed with the Bill before we have had time to come to some decision amongst ourselves as to what is best for us to do under the altered circumstances of the case. The right hon. Baronet must be sensible that it is placing us in a very unfair position, and putting us at a very serious disadvantage, in asking us to proceed with the discussion of the measure under the new light which he has thrown upon it by the course of action he is now taking; and I think it is a reasonable request that, in view of the very serious difference of opinion which has been developed, Progress should be reported in order that we may have an interval in which to decide upon the course we ought to take with regard to the Bill.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): I think, after what has fallen from the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), that he must have entirely misunderstood, or be misinformed as to the action which I took in this case. I am speaking in the recollection of hon. Members who heard me the other night and to-night, when I say that I merely stated that, individually, I had no objection to remove the Royal Irish Constabulary from the scope of the Bill, on account of the difference existing between the Constabulary and the ordinary police in respect of voting qualifications. I stated, when the Bill was last before us, that, in Committee, I should be prepared to strike out the portion of the Bill relating to the Constabulary, but that I was in the hands of the Committee, and should leave it to the Committee to decide the question. I do not think the hon. Member for the City of Cork has any right to put upon me what I have not stated. I should be sorry if the Motion of the hon. Member for South Tyrone were agreed to; nor do I see what advantage there would be in adjourning on the present occasion, because the Bill has reached that stage when it must be proceeded with unblocked, if I may use the expression; and, therefore, after the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers), as to the way in which he proposes to meet the difficulty in the case of hon. Members below the Gangway, I think I may appeal fairly to hon. Members to allow the Committee to go on with the Bill.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I am bound to say that it must be in the knowledge of the Committee, and of the right hon. Baronet in charge of the Bill, that if my hon. Friend, and those who take the same view as he does, had regarded the promise of the right hon. Baronet as one which would not exclude the Irish Constabulary, our only course would have been to block the Bill. If the Amendment standing in the name of my hon. Friend were carried, what would happen? As certainly as I stand here, Lord Milltown, in the House of Lords, who is on the watch for this proposal, would get the clause restored; and then, on the consideration of the Lords' Amendments, at a time when we can only speak once, the clause would be finally replaced in the Bill. I think the right hon. Baronet should make the concession we ask, in view of the fact that the Bill is unblocked; and that he ought to carry out what is believed on these Benches to have been the spirit of the pledge that he gave; because, unless we had taken the view which has been stated, the Bill would never have been heard of again.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): It appears to me that there is not the slightest contradiction between the statements of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and the right hon. Baronet in charge of the Bill. I did not understand my hon. Friend to say that the right hon. Baronet had himself given a definite promise. I understood him to say that a definite promise had been given from the front Opposition Bench. We do not wish to make factious opposition in any sense to the Bill; but it has been admitted by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) that a certain time must elapse before this franchise can properly be given to these persons for the purpose of putting them in precisely the same position as ordinary citizens.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin): The hon. Member must confine his observations to the Motion to report Progress.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): The Committee will, perhaps, allow me to say that what I did on a former occasion was to advise my right hon. Friend behind me that, in certain circumstances, he should not be too strict about including the Irish Constabulary in this Bill. I think that the proceedings of this evening have shown that my advice on the matter of tactics was not altogether bad; but we must remember that the right hon. Baronet did not accept my advice.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): Although I should be willing to grant the Constabulary the franchise I cannot continue to support this Bill, because I believe that a gross breach of faith has been committed.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must confine his observations to the Motion to report Progress.

Mr. CLANCY: I beg to say that a verbal promise was given by the right hon. Baronet that he would exclude the Constabulary from the Bill; and the effect of that verbal promise was that the hon. Member for South Belfast gave Notice that, in consequence of the concession to hon. Members below the Gangway, he himself should oppose it in Committee. It is well known that in Dublin——

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is not speaking to the Motion before the Committee.

Mr. CLANCY: If I am not in Order I will not continue; but I must repeat my belief that a gross breach of faith has been committed.

Mr. J. A. BLAKE (Carlow): I think the Motion to report Progress is a very reasonable one. I shall support it if my hon. Friend goes to a division; but I trust that the right hon. Baronet will accept it in view of the lateness of the hour.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): I venture to express a hope that the right hon. Baronet will not think it necessary, after the expression of opinion which has taken place, to resist the Motion for Progress.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON: I have no desire to place myself in opposition to the wishes of the Committee, and shall not, therefore, offer any further objection to the Motion to report Progress.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

COPYHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

(*Mr. Charles James, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Stafford Howard, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Mellor.*)

[BILL 26.] CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

Amendment proposed,

In Clause 33, at end, add—" But where an owner is entitled to moorlands which are intermixed with other moorlands not belonging to him, over the whole of which the lord of the manor now has any rights of hunting, shooting, fowling, chasing, killing, or otherwise taking game, it shall not be lawful for such owner to compel enfranchisement of any such sporting rights, unless such owner be entitled to one-fourth at least of the whole quantity of such intermixed moorlands."—(*Viscount Grimston.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. ALLISON (Cumberland, Eskdale): I find that the noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Grimston) makes no concession whatever with regard to this Amendment, and therefore I feel bound to protest against the alteration of the clause as it stands in the Bill. One objection which I have to the Amendment, amongst others, is that these sporting rights are very often not in the hands of the lord of the manor himself, but are let to strangers—that is to say, the owners of the copyhold are left to be dealt with by gamekeepers and others. I think it is hard that they should be so left, and propose that the clause should be maintained in the same form as that in which it passed this House last year. I understand that the Amendment is put forward in order to induce certain Members of the other House to pass the Bill. That is, I confess, a new argument; but I trust this House of Commons will not show itself more tender of these rights claimed on the land of other persons than its Predecessor. The noble Viscount has given us no real argument in support of his Amendment, although, by way of illustration the other night, he supposed the floor of the House to be a copyhold in the midst of a manor which was represented by the benches; and he asked what would be the position of the unfortunate lord of the manor if the owner of the copyhold had the right to kill the game on his land? Well, Sir, to that I reply by asking what would be the position of the unfortunate owner of the copyhold if he is to be excluded for ever from those sporting rights which undoubtedly interfere with the convenient occupation of his land? I think it is a very hard case, and I trust the clause will be inserted in the Bill as it originally passed the House of Commons last year, and that this Amendment will be rejected.

Viscount GRIMSTON (Herts, St. Albans): I beg to call the attention of the hon. Member who has just sat down to the fact that I was not in the House of Commons when the Bill came up and passed with this clause in it. I happen to know of cases in which great injustice would be done to the lord of the manor by such enfranchisement as is now demanded. For instance, let us assume a sum of money—say, a moorland is worth £400 a-year, and that a quarter of it is in the hands of one copyholder, or rather less than a quarter, it would be very hard indeed for that copyholder to be able to enfranchise the sporting rights over that small portion, and so destroy the letting value of the whole moor.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must remind the noble Lord that he is not entitled to speak again.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I rise to record a protest against the contention of the hon. Member below me, because this question involves the sound principle that sporting rights go with the land. That principle has been laid down in recent legislation, known as the Hares and Rabbits Act; and when we remember the gross injustice that prevailed in consequence of the occupiers of land, the hard-working tenant farmers and copyholders, being unable to secure themselves against the depredation of other people's game, it is monstrous to suppose that in this new Radical House of Commons we should venture to insist on the preservation of what my hon. Friend calls those iniquitous rights of landlords that the House last year refused to recognize. We have had enough of watering down principles in this House in order to meet the opposition of noble Lords in "another place." I shall certainly continue my protest against this Amendment, because I believe that it is simply devised to meet such opposition as that to which I refer. Though the noble Viscount opposite may talk of injustice to the lord of the manor, I daresay he knows cases where greater injustice would be done to the small copyholders under such a clause as he has here drafted. There is a case with which, if I am not misinformed, the noble Viscount ought to be familiar, where the manor is something like 30,000 acres in extent. I should like to know how many of the copyholders of that manor would be entitled to benefit under such a clause as is here proposed? I am both a copyholder and a lord of the manor myself, and in both capacities I wish to utter a protest against the clause. Having in the course of my life occupied both positions, I may be able to take an independent view of the question. I do not wish to detain the House at this late hour; I would only draw attention to the fact that it is clear that so long as lords of the manor are permitted to hold these sporting rights over the lands of other people, these other people being those who do the hard work in the way of cultivation, so long must gross injustice exist. For that reason, as well as for other reasons, I certainly hope the House will not sanction such a course as is now suggested.

MR. C. H. JAMES (Merthyr Tydvil): The object of the Amendment is not that the lord of the manor shall have rights over inclosed grounds which have been given to other parties; but it is simply this—that where there are moorlands, as it were, waste lands, of, say, 20,000 or 30,000 acres in extent, as there are in some cases, and where parts of these moorlands have been appropriated to persons in consequence of the right of common being merged, or something of that sort, and these rights having been reserved under the Commons Inclosure Acts, that only in these cases the lord of the manor would still retain his right. I am not more favourable to the lord of the manor than to the copyholder; but we must have reasonable justice done. Take a case. You may have a moorland, say, of 20,000 acres, and of that 500 or 600 acres may be granted by the proprietor to another person, or to two or three other persons. One or more of these parties having land intermixed with the lords may give notice under the Bill as it stands, and in that way he may become entitled to shoot game with the lord of the manor; so that persons owning only 500 acres may destroy absolutely, or, at any rate, to a great extent, the amenity of the shooting of 20,000 acres. These are valuable rights, and inasmuch as they are valuable rights, until we deal with the Game Laws as a question of Game Laws, I think we ought to stand by them as they exist at present. The effect of this Amendment is that it is to apply only to moorland—that is to say, rough common land. Hon. Gentlemen speak as if it were proposed to run over arable land, or land which has been thoroughly inclosed, and upon which the copyholders have spent their labour and so forth. Nothing of the sort. It only affects moorland. If it is the fact that the lord already has the right of shooting over this land, it seems to me that the right ought to be reserved to him, unless he agrees to resign it, under the circumstances covered by the Amendment.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 28; Noes 66: Majority 38.—(Div. List, No. 71.)

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I think the noble Viscount has some reason to complain that the Government, after accepting this Amendment, did not support him.

MR. SPEAKER: What day does the hon. Member propose to fix for the third reading?

MR. C. H. JAMES: I should like to ask the House to agree to the third reading at once.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Mr. C. H. James.*)

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I would like to remark that the hon. Member for North-West Staffordshire (Mr. Leveson Gower), who is responsible for the Crown Revenues, voted just now in a manner that I am sure, on a future occasion, may operate to the detriment of the Revenues of the Crown. It is patent that the Crown may have valuable rights which may be injuriously affected by the confiscatory effects of this Bill, which were not suspected when it passed the House last year, and which, if they had been suspected, would have been removed by some such equitable clause as that proposed by the noble Viscount.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS UNDER "THE LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881."

Copy *presented*,—of Return of Proceedings up to the 31st March 1886 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LONDON SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS.

Return *presented*,—of the Expenses of the London School Board Elections in 1882 and 1885, &c. [Address 22nd March; *Mr. William Henry Smith*]; to lie upon the Table.

ARRESTS FOR DRUNKENNESS (IRELAND).

Return *presented*,—giving the number of Arrests for Drunkenness within the Metropolitan Police District of Dublin, the cities of Cork, Limerick, and Waterford, and town of Belfast, between 7th May 1883 and 29th April 1885, &c. [ordered 22nd March; *Sir James Corry*]; to lie upon the Table.

GENERAL ELECTION, 1885 (ILLITERATE VOTERS) (IRELAND).

Return *presented*,—showing the number of Illiterate Voters at the last General Election in Ireland [ordered 25th March; *Captain M'Calmont*]; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY TREASURER'S FEE FUND (IRELAND).

Copy *presented*,—of Account for the year ended 25th March 1886 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

REFRESHMENT CHARGES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Select Committee *appointed*, "to inquire into the Refreshment Charges and Arrangements of the House."—(*Mr. Biggar.*)

House adjourned at a quarter before Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 14*th April*, 1886.

MINUTES.] — New Writ Issued — *For* Bradford (Central Division), *v.* The Right honble. William Edward Forster, deceased.

Public Bills — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Medical Act (1858) Amendment* [183]; Fires Prevention (Metropolis)* [184]; Quarry Fencing* [185].

Second Reading—Police Constables' Pensions [28], *debate adjourned;* Beer Adulteration (No. 3) [66], *debate adjourned;* Solicitors' Annual Certificate Duty [133], *debate adjourned.*

Report of Select Committee—Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) [No. 114].

Third Reading—Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment)* [123]; Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act (1855) Amendment* [152], and *passed.*

Withdrawn—Land Cultivation [71].

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

POSTPONEMENT OF SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Arnold Morley) (Nottingham, E.) said, that it was proposed to take the second reading of this Bill on Monday, the 10th of May, instead of Thursday, the 6th, as previously arranged.

Second Reading *deferred* from Thursday 6th till *Monday* 10th May.

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS (GLOUCESTER COUNTY, SOUTHERN DIVISION).

Mr. SPEAKER acquainted the House, that he had received from the Honourable Sir William Ventris Field, and the Honourable Sir John Charles Day, two of the Judges selected for the Trial of Election Petitions, a Certificate and Report relating to the Southern Division of the County of Gloucester, and the same were read as follows:—

The Corrupt Practices Prevention Acts, 1854 to 1883.

To the Right Honourable the Speaker of the House of Commons.

We, the Honourable Sir William Ventris Field, knight, and the Honourable Sir John Charles Day, knight, Justices of the High Court of Justice, and two of the Judges for the time being for the trial of Election Petitions in England, do hereby, in pursuance of the said Acts, certify that upon the eighth, ninth, and tenth days of March, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, we duly held a Court at the Shire Hall, Gloucester, in the County of Gloucester, and afterwards on the thirteenth day of April, in the year aforesaid, at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London (by virtue of an Order of a Divisional Court of the High Court of Justice), for the trial of and did try the Parliamentary Election Petition for the Southern or Thornbury Division of the County of Gloucester, wherein Benjamin St. John Ackers was the Petitioner and Edward Stafford Howard was the Respondent, which prayed that it might be determined that the said Edward Stafford

Howard was not duly elected or returned for the said Division of the said County, and that his Election and return were and are wholly null and void, and that the Petitioner, the said Benjamin St. John Ackers, was duly elected for the said Division, and ought to have been returned for the same.

Now we, in pursuance of the said Acts, report and certify in writing to you our determination that the said Edward Stafford Howard, being the Member whose Election and return were complained of in the said Petition, was duly elected and returned for the said Division, and that the said Benjamin St. John Ackers was not duly elected for the same.

And whereas charges were made in the said Petition of corrupt and illegal practices having been committed at the said Election. We, in further pursuance of the said Acts, report as follows: That no corrupt or illegal practice was proved to have been committed by or with the knowledge or consent of any Candidate at such Election, nor has any Candidate been proved guilty by his Agents of any illegal practice within the meaning of "The Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883," with reference to such Election.

We further report that there is no reason to believe that either corrupt or illegal practices extensively prevailed at the Parliamentary Election for the Southern or Thornbury Division of the County of Gloucester, to which the said Petition relates.

Dated this 13th day of April 1886.

William V. Field.

John C. Day.

And the said Certificate and Report were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

QUESTION.

——o——

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (SCOTLAND)—EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF TRAVELLING TINKERS.

Mr. JACKS (Leith, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, If his attention has been called to the number of people, chiefly travelling tinkers, in Scotland who can neither read or write; if he is aware that nothing practical is being done by the Educational Department to remedy this evil by reaching the present young generation; and, if he can hold out any hopes of this difficult question being dealt with in the near future?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.), in reply, said, the subject of the education of travelling tinkers' children (many of whom it was alleged could neither read nor write) was brought under the notice of the Scottish Education Department and himself some time ago by his hon. Friend the Member for West Perthshire (Sir Donald Currie.) The subject had since been carefully considered by the Department, and he had caused certain inquiries to be made, with the view of ascertaining approximately the number of tinkers' children who could neither read nor write. The Department had been, and were then, in communication with the Local Government Board in regard to legislation for dealing with cases of a somewhat similar character in England; and they were also in communication with those who had taken a local interest in the matter, with the view of ascertaining whether the provisions of the law were adequate to meet the difficulty, and if not, in what respect these provisions required to be amended. The case of those children in Scotland would be considered in connection with that legislation.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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POLICE CONSTABLES' PENSIONS BILL.

(*Lord Claud John Hamilton, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Raikes, Sir George Russell.*)

[BILL 28.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping), in rising to move that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that one of the most valuable bodies of public servants in the Kingdom, the police constables, had for a long time past been expecting the law in regard to their pensions to be altered and their positions improved; and if he succeeded in obtaining the assent of the House to the Motion, and could induce the Government to take up the subject, he should be glad to postpone the further stages of his Bill until the Government brought forward theirs, so that they might hope to have that question settled during the present Session. There existed a considerable amount of what, in his opinion, was just dissatisfaction in the Police Force of this country at the way in which they had long been treated in reference to that matter. The police complained that they were bound to contribute towards funds from which they were not really certain to derive the benefit to which they were entitled after their term of service closed.

At present the superannuation funds were made up of contributions from various sources. They included a stoppage of 2½ per cent from the pay of the constables and officers of the force, also fines paid by the constables, or stoppages during illness, and likewise some other sources over which the magistracy of the country had some control. It was true that the superannuation funds of certain of the counties and boroughs were in a satisfactory condition; but the inquiry held from 1875 to 1877 by a Committee on the subject showed conclusively, on the evidence of so eminent a statistician as the late Dr. Farr, that most of those funds, and even those which appeared to be most flourishing at that moment, were practically insufficient to meet the claim to pensions upon them; and that, therefore, the rates would ultimately be the source from which those pensions must be paid. The present, he would admit, was not the time when it was desirable that additional burdens should be thrown on the rates, unless by that increase, should it be necessary, they obtained an equivalent in the way of efficiency and good service. The police complained of the uncertainty of their pensions, and that the effect of the limit as to age was that they could not come before the police committee for the consideration of pension until after they were 60 years of age. A man might enlist at the age of 35. Most of them enlisted either at about 19 or 20; and yet the man who had entered at 35, after a short service, could come before the committee and ask that a pension should be charged on the rates for his benefit; while the man who had entered at 20 had to serve 40 years in the force before he was entitled to make that appeal. At any moment, too, after the man had served, perhaps, 20 or 25 years, it was within the power—though the power might not be exercised, except in very rare cases—of the police authorities in counties and the watch committees in boroughs, to dismiss a man and send him away from the service causing him to lose every benefit to which his contributions led him to think he was entitled. All the evidence taken before the Committee went to show that the men were very anxious for a certainty of pension. Colonel Fraser, the able Commissioner of the Police of the City, had said—

"If they knew that they had a right to claim a pension, instead of going away when their health was comparatively good, they would be induced to remain."

Constable Chambers, of the Buckinghamshire Force, had said—

"The feeling of the men is, they would like a certainty—a certain amount of pension after a certain amount of service. I have known many a man who has been in the force four or five years—say, just as he has got useful to the force—'It is all uncertain: I shall leave and look out for something better, where I do not have to get up at night.' If there had been a certain pension, it would have been an inducement to several men that I knew to remain."

Mr. Wilkinson, Chairman of the Police Committee of Durham, had also stated that he attached the greatest possible importance to this question of certainty of pension, and that he was quite certain, from seeing what he had seen of the men who joined, as a member of the Police Committee, that the men were deterred from joining because they had their doubts about the pension. That had also been the general opinion of Chief Constables, Inspectors, sergeants, and numerous gentlemen representing police committees in the counties, the whole of their evidence going to show that the present uncertainty of pension was a great subject of complaint. He would ask the House whether, from the economical point of view, in connection with the charge to be made on the taxation of the country, he was not justified in saying that not only the Police Force, but the country would gain by the fact of there being a certainty of pension? Colonel Henderson, in his evidence before the Committee, had stated that the cost of making an efficient policeman in the Metropolitan Force was about £200 a-man, and the training of men cost nearly as much in the counties. He (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson), therefore, maintained that it would be economical to do something in the way of fixity of pensions to induce trained men to remain in the force. As to the other complaint, a mass of evidence was taken by the Select Committee which considered the question of police superannuation some time ago; and, in the main, it amounted to this—that 25 years' service represented almost the limit of real police service; but a really efficient man would not go out of the force at 40 or 45 years to begin a new employment while he had the power of remaining in the force on full pay. It would be of great service that a man should be pensioned when he was used up; because, under the present system, a man very often felt that he was not equal to his work, but dared not leave the service, because he lost everything by doing so. The efficiency of the police was thus diminished; the heads of the police did not like to discharge a man because they thought it unfair; and the man would not leave, on account of the terrible drawback of losing his chance of pension. The next question which the Committee had had to consider, and which the House would have to consider, if certainty of pension were to be granted on the ground of economy, or on the ground that it met the just demands of the Police Force, was the period at which that fixity of pension should be allowed to be obtained. A great deal of evidence had also been obtained upon this point by the Committee, and, of course, in that evidence there had been a certain variety of opinion; but, in the main, the weight of evidence had come to this—that 25 years' service was the proper time at which a man might claim a pension as of right, while the scale might be adopted which at present was enjoyed in the Metropolitan Force. If they could arrive at the term at which the real efficiency of a policeman terminated, he maintained that it was a question both of economy and efficiency to give him power to retire at that period. There could be no doubt they would get a greater amount of efficiency from their police under the Bill. As to the argument that they should not increase the taxation of the localities, that did not altogether apply to this matter, because the economy secured by the Bill would be an ample equivalent. If the scheme was treated in a liberal way, there would not be a large increase in the pension list. As to the existing defects in the pension list, he would point out that provisions for remedying them were inserted in the Bill; and he hoped a better fate was in store for it than awaited it last year, and that the House would at last do tardy justice. As he had said, he would welcome an announcement from the Government that they would take up the question and carry it to a just conclusion; and if the House would agree to the principle of the Bill by reading it a second time, he would be glad to leave the matter in the hands of the Government. The right hon. Baronet concluded by moving the second reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) said, he rose early in the debate, because he wished to make an appeal which he did not think would be regarded as an unreasonable one. He had listened with great attention to all that the right hon. Baronet opposite had said, and he hoped he would allow him to congratulate him on having put his case so clearly before the House. The whole of the facts were very well stated in the Report of the Committee, and his right hon. Friend had explained the salient points of the Report; and he (Mr. Childers) was very glad that his right hon. Friend had had an opportunity of making a statement which could not but be in general satisfactory to the House, to the force, and to the country. The position of the matter was this—his right hon. Friend had the opportunity of making that admirable statement to the House. On the other hand, the Government had promised the House that soon after Easter they would bring in a Bill, solving, as they hoped, the whole of this question. The only points referred to especially by his right hon. Friend were points which would be brought up in debate by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Oswestry Division of Shropshire (Mr. Stanley Leighton), who had given Notice of an Amendment, and by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Biggleswade Division of Bedfordshire (Mr. Magniac). In general terms the House knew what must follow. There would be a very long debate; and, under those circumstances, the appeal he would make to his right hon. Friend was this—he (Mr. Childers) had shown that he was not opposed—very much the reverse—to the general propositions brought forward, although, of course, he could not commit himself to any details. He said more; the Committee went very closely into the whole of this question, and he should rather be inclined to give great weight to the recommendations of the Committee. Having said that much, and also that if it was his privilege to continue to sit on the Treasury Bench he would do his best to have his measure passed into law before the end of the present Session, he would appeal to his right hon. Friend to allow the present debate to be now adjourned until he saw the fate of the Government Bill. If the present debate proceeded, the greater part of the afternoon would be occupied with it; and probably, after all, the course he suggested should be taken now would be adopted then. By adopting that course, his right hon. Friend would prevent a waste of time by a duplicate debate.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) said, he was sure his right hon. Friend (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) and the House generally would be gratified to hear the statement of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Childers); and he (Mr. Howard Vincent) was certain that his right hon. Friend would be only too glad to adopt any course that would tend to facilitate legislation on the subject. He thought, however, that if the debate were allowed to proceed that afternoon it would tend to save the time of the House in the future. The Police Force would be pleased to hear that the Home Secretary was so favourably disposed towards the measure, and that he was prepared to carry out the pledge he had previously given, and that had been promised by many of his Predecessors, to deal with this question at as early a date as possible. But it would materially facilitate the enactment of a measure in the course of the present Session if the House now consented to read the Bill a second time. For no less than 18 years the Police Force of the country had been promised by successive Home Secretaries, by successive Governments, that the matter of their pensions should be placed upon a proper basis, and during all that long period they had been waiting patiently for a settlement. They had been treated with many complimentary phrases and many promises; but their interests remained to this day ignored. It was not only the police themselves who were suffering; the public interest was also deeply concerned in the settlement of this long-deferred question. Brave and loyal men as were the police of the country, rarely shirking their duty, however arduous, however dangerous, it was but natural that they should feel that the long delay of this matter constituted a serious and a legitimate grievance. They would be more than human if they never counted the cost and reward of devotion to duty. It was, indeed, but a small incentive to courage, in the dead of the night, against the armed burglar, or the skulking assassin, for the solitary policeman, equipped with only a truncheon, to feel that, if he was injured, there was no certain provision for him—if he was killed there was no assured resort for his widow and his children, but the workhouse. The duty of the soldier was discharged under the eye and leadership of his superior, amid circumstances of great excitement and the blare of trumpets; but the duty of the policeman was usually performed alone, and often in the face of much difficulty and prejudice, and the guarantee that the public had that the policeman would discharge his duty faithfully was almost wholly in his integrity and honour. Surely, under those circumstances, the interest as well as the duty of the public lay in making proper provision for those on whom their security so largely depended. As he (Mr. Howard Vincent) once heard the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer say—

> "It should be our business, as well as our pleasure, to take care of those who take care of us."

On the same occasion, which was early in 1881, the right hon. Gentleman, who now controlled the purse of the nation, said—

> "I hope that at an early period it may be my grateful office to add to their comfort and content by supplying a defect which has long been felt, in placing on a fixed and satisfactory footing, not only in London, but throughout the country, the superannuation and pension of those who had spent the best days of their lives in the service of their countrymen."

Under the existing system the question of pension depended entirely upon the generosity, or not seldom, it might be, the caprice of the police authorities. He need not tell the House that the most active policeman was not always the most popular with the members of a watch committee in a small town. The result consequently was the grossest inequality in the pensions awarded. A case was present to his mind of a man with 21 years' service, who had been terribly injured by 11 stabs from a desperate burglar, receiving only a temporary pension of 15*s*. a-week for 12 months; while a comrade, who had the good fortune to serve the generous Corporation of Sheffield, received, for only 18 months' service, a gratuity of £30. Then, again, there was no power of giving any allowance whatever to the children of a deceased constable. The inevitable result of that short-sighted policy was to prevent many first-rate men from joining the force, and to afford an inducement to retire at the first possible opportunity, and also, he feared sometimes, though rarely, to avoid doing that which might involve them in difficulty, however urgently necessary. Some objection might be taken to an apparent increase in the local police rates which the Bill before the House might possibly impose; but it might, he submitted, be raised at a later stage, and he was not without hope that the Government might see their way to assist the localities in the matter in the same proportion as they contributed towards the pay and clothing. The police themselves would largely contribute to the pension fund, not only by daily deductions from their pay, but also by fines for misconduct, and by the performance of, so to say, extra duty, and to an amount considerably over £100,000 a-year. They had waited for years and years with the utmost patience for that measure, the justice of which had been repeatedly and emphatically recognized. He ventured, therefore, to hope that the House would now lose no further time in settling the matter, and that they would allow the Bill to be read a second time.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) said, that, though in favour of the pensions and gratuities to the police being raised, and of the Police Force being placed upon the footing most agreeable to them, he objected to his right hon. Friend (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) putting his hand, as it were, into other people's pockets for the purpose of carrying out his object. His right hon. Friend represented the taxpayers, and he was asking the taxpayers to put their hands into the pockets of the ratepayers in order to do a good service to the police. He (Mr. Stanley Leighton) desired in every way to support the object; but he thought the means of carrying it out should come from the pockets of the taxpayers. He was not by any means re-assured by the announcement of the Home Secretary that he would bring in a Bill which would go further than the Bill of his right hon. Friend the Member for the Epping Division of Essex. The Committee which sat some 10 years ago, and of which his right hon. Friend was Chairman, did not call before them a single representative of the ratepayers, but confined the evidence almost entirely to that of policemen and those who represented the police. In this revolutionary period it was, no doubt, a good thing to make friends with the police. Parliament had already given them the franchise, and it was now proposed to give them something in the shape of increased pay; but when his right hon. Friend urged that every policeman should be superannuated at the age of 46 if he had given 20 years' service, he did not know what the Essex Hunt would say if masters of hounds were proposed to be superannuated at that age. His right hon. Friend asked the House to accept a Bill of 35 clauses, repealing 15 Acts of Parliament—a prodigious proposal, such as, he believed, had never before been brought forward by a private Member. It was 10 years since the Committee of which the right hon. Gentleman was a Member sat, and during that 10 years the Government with which his right hon. Friend was connected was in Office for six years, yet they never chose to grapple with the question. He (Mr. Stanley Leighton) thought the police had ample grounds to complain of both the Governments which during that period were in power for not attending to their complaints. A similar measure to that then under discussion was brought forward by the late Government; but several pages of Amendments were placed on the Paper by Liberal Members, by Irish Members, and by Conservative Members. Sir Massey Lopes objected to it because it increased local burdens, the hon. Member for Herefordshire (Mr. Duckham) objected that it placed upon the local exchequer burdens which ought to be borne by the Imperial Exchequer, and Colonel Kingscote objected to it because it broke through the bargain of 1874, by which half the pay and half the cost of clothing was to be provided by the State. His right hon. Friend had said truly that pensions were nothing more than deferred pay; but he omitted to provide that half the increased pensions and gratuities should be borne by the Imperial Exchequer. The Local Authorities were trusted to enlist the men and to govern them; but they were not to be trusted when it became a question of removing them from the force and pensioning them. His right hon. Friend, it appeared to him, was proposing a Bill to prevent arbitrary evictions from the force, to provide policemen with fixity of tenure, and to give them a claim to unexhausted improvements in the amount of money they had contributed to the police fund. He (Mr. Stanley Leighton) was in favour of their having the benefit of the unexhausted improvements in the pension fund; but the increased payment should come out of the general Exchequer of the country, and not out of the local exchequer. No distinction was made in regard to the maximum and minimum amount of pension where incapacity arose from accidental injury or from injury caused by violence; and he maintained that there was no branch of the Public Service in which, in case of temporary injury, a pension on full pay was granted. A man might be unfit for night duty, and might be perfectly fitted for other work, yet, according to the Bill, that man would have precisely the same pension as one who was wholly incapacitated for service. The Committee had considered two ways of dealing with pensions, one being the amalgamation scheme of putting all the police funds together and administering them through one central office, and the other the plan of doing away with the funds altogether and placing the pensions entirely upon the rates. The Bill adhered to neither of these proposals. It was economically wrong to keep up these funds and to supplement them out of the rates. But no one was permitted in those days to object to any course unless he was prepared to put forward an alternative; and the alternative he would suggest, in place of the Bill of his right hon. Friend, was that the matter should be dealt with in the same manner as life insurance. There were 30,000 police in England and 240 funds, making about 13 or 14 policemen to every fund. How could they strike an average when they had so small a number of lives to insure? But 30,000 was quite a sufficiently large number on which to strike an average, and the economical method of dealing with the question of police superannuation was to get all the funds together under a Government Office, and then to make the pensions and gratuities such as his right hon. Friend proposed. In Ireland, where there were 15,000 police, the superannuation was managed by the Government; and he did not see why in England, also, the pension funds should not be provided by the Imperial Government. At present £300,000 a-year was spent in pensions and gratuities, and it might be reckoned that the additional amount which the proposals of the Bill would involve was £200,000, so that a charge of £500,000 would be thrown upon the already over-burdened ratepayers. The ratepayers had a claim, through their Representatives, to say that no Bill should be passed throwing more burdens upon them till the whole question of the taxation of realty and personalty—the whole question between the ratepayer and taxpayer—had been fairly considered by the House of Commons. He was in favour of giving the police increased gratuities and larger pensions, but would give his strongest opposition to any Bill, from whichever side of the House it came, that would place another farthing of charge upon the rates. In his opinion, this was a retrograde measure, unjust in principle, and unsound in finance. He begged to move, as an Amendment to the Motion—

> "That statutory pensions granted by Parliament to the Police ought not to be provided for by imposing fresh burdens on the ratepayers."

Mr. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge), in seconding the Amendment, said, that, although not favourably disposed to the extension of the system of pensions, he was prepared to admit that, while Civil Service pensions were given, there was no class more deserving of them than the police. He, however, entirely endorsed the opinions of the last speaker, that if an extension was to be given to the system of police pensions, the fund from which the addition should come should be that to which the whole wealth of the country contributed, and not that which was provided from real property alone, which received the least amount of protection from the police, and which, from its nature, least needed their services.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "statutory pensions granted by Parliament to the Police ought not to be provided by imposing fresh burdens on the ratepayers,"—(*Mr. Stanley Leighton,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said, he did not wish the debate to close without a word of sympathy from the Front Opposition Bench with the proposal that the police should have some greater security than they now enjoyed in the matter of pensions and gratuities. That, he took it, was undisputed. The only point on which any question arose was as to where the burden should fall. That was a question of great difficulty, and it involved, amongst other matters, the question of the incidence of these charges as between local rates and the Imperial Exchequer. He was glad they had had an opportunity of discussing that point; because, though he entertained the opinion that the Bill dealt with a subject which ought, properly and finally, to be dealt with by the responsible Government of the day, a Wednesday afternoon afforded those hon. Members who wished to have the question fully discussed a far better opportunity than would be afforded by a Government Bill brought on at half-past 11 o'clock or 12 o'clock at night. Being of opinion that the question ought to be dealt with by the Government, he was inclined to support the suggestion of the Home Secretary that the final decision on the present Bill should be put off till after the Government had had an opportunity of expounding their proposals. But, in saying that, he would not wish to detract for a moment from the right and title of his right hon. Friend (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) to take up almost an official position on the subject. He hoped the Government would not press for the debate to be too rapidly brought to a close, because he had a strong feeling that it would serve to bring out the differences of opinion that existed, and would clear the ground for the Government when they introduced their own Bill. Without too definitely committing himself upon the question whether the change should fall upon Imperial taxation or local funds, or other funds, he thought they should contend for three distinct principles—namely, that the police should be put in a position of greater certainty in regard to deferred pay, gratuities, and pensions; that the interests of the ratepayers should be sufficiently protected from persons being improperly placed upon the non-effective list by the medical claims for that purpose being searchingly attended to; and that the liability to contribute should carry with it the right to a voice in the management of the fund. He hoped they would be able to arrive at a decision on this vexed question before very long.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that his object had been served, for the discussion which had taken place had elicited from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary not only that he was favourable to the object of the Bill, but that the Bill which was to come from the Government would deal with all the points which, in justice to the police, he (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) had dealt with himself, and would also contemplate the method by which the funds were to be raised in the spirit of the Amendment. He hoped the Government would take it up in that spirit, and not put additional burdens on the ratepayers. He was satisfied with the course the discussion had taken, and still more with the promise of the right hon. Gentleman; and he would, therefore, move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Tuesday* 4th May.

LAND CULTIVATION BILL.—[Bill 71.]

(*Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Arch, Mr. Burt.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton), in rising to move that the Bill be now read a second time, the object of which was to make compulsory the proper cultivation of the lands of the country, said, he felt that his task was one in the discharge of which he should require the indulgence of hon. Members on both sides of the House; and especially he had the difficulty of introducing the subject from a point of view never before discussed in the English Parliament. His Bill had already been the subject of considerable animadversion. It was said that he was desirous of weakening the landed interest; and if by landed interest was meant the interests of the landlords, it was perfectly true that he was hostile to them as a class. It had been suggested by some organs of the Press that the Bill had been introduced by way of bravado; that it showed the folly of its promoters; and that its object was confiscation, by people who had no land, of the land of others. He hoped he should be able to show the House that the Bill was not an act of folly; that it was not, at least, an act of bravado; and, whether the House might think fit to accept it or not, the Bill was based upon principles which the English nation were beginning to discuss, and which the House would have to consider; that it was warranted by facts—facts not depending on any unauthorized statements, but facts officially vouched, and which showed the need of some measure, even if not such a measure as that he felt it his duty to propose. He would at once disarm himself, in the presence of any who might be antagonistic critics, by saying that he was not satisfied with his own Bill. It did not go far enough. He was not quite sure that the admission would recommend him to the generosity of anyone who criticized the Bill; but it was true that there were many scores of thousands of acres of land now uncultivated in this country which were cultivable with profit, but which the Bill, in its present form, would not reach. If the House should think fit to read the Bill a second time, he admitted it would require exceedingly wide amendment in Committee. He desired to submit to the House four propositions. The first was that there was a very large quantity of land in an uncultivated state. There could be no doubt about that. The Agricultural Returns showed it; and even of the land described in official Returns as cultivated, and which, of course, the Bill would not touch, there were many thousands of acres that were hardly cultivated at all; and he submitted that that land ought to be forced into cultivation. His second proposition was that a very large proportion of that land was cultivable with profit. The third was that the right of ownership of cultivable land ought to carry with it the duty of cultivation. He contended that the men who neglected that duty, and who allowed land they owned to evade and avoid its responsibilities, were unpatriotic and disloyal. And, fourthly, the cultivation of land now uncultivated would provide possible remunerative employment for the whole of the unemployed in this country. And, at least, this should be a matter for consideration by those who had been proposing to expend large sums in temporary relief works. The employment this Bill would provide would be continuing; it would develop self-reliant effort, and would be without cost to the taxpayer. He would first show the area of uncultivated land, adopting for the moment the definitions of cultivated and uncultivated given in the official Agricultural Returns. These Returns for the year 1885 showed that in England, with an area of 32,597,398 acres, there were 24,844,490 acres of cultivated land, leaving over 7,752,908 unaccounted for. Of course, unaccounted for was not all uncultivated. In Wales, with an area of 4,721,823 acres, there were 2,809,558 acres cultivated, leaving 1,912,265 acres unaccounted for. In Scotland, with an area of 19,466,978 acres, there were 4,845,805 acres cultivated, leaving the enormous area of 14,501,173 acres unaccounted for. In Ireland, out of a total area of 20,819,847 acres, there were 15,242,837 acres under cultivation, leaving 5,577,010 acres unaccounted for. It was, however, clear to any careful reader of the evidence taken before the Royal Commission that the cultivated area in Ireland was inaccurately stated. The aggregate figures gave a result, for the United Kingdom and Ireland, of a total area of 77,606,146 acres, of which over 47,708,698 acres were under cultivation, while over 29,897,000 acres were unaccounted for. In an article published in *The Fortnightly Review*, the space to be deducted—space occupied by cities, towns, villages, roads, rail, canals, rivers, lakes, &c.—was estimated by Captain (now Admiral) Maxse at 3,898,839 acres. In Ireland the proportion allowed in the Returns was 4·3 per cent. Assuming that the cities, towns, roads, rivers, &c. covered an area of some 4,000,000 acres, that would leave about

25,000,000 acres unaccounted for. Nor ought even the land described in the Agricultural Returns as cultivated to be so considered without grave doubt. The Reports of the Sub-Commissioners of the Royal Commission showed that, in a vast number of instances in which land was described as being in cultivation, it was not only not being cultivated to the fullest extent possible, but was actually going out of cultivation, in consequence of the stringent restrictive clauses in the leases under which the land was let. It was in consequence of these restrictive clauses, and of the extraction of rents which exhausted all margin, that land which might be cultivated at a profit was being forced out of cultivation. Mr. Little, one of the Assistant Commissioners, said (p. 52)—

> "The impoverished and beggared condition of farms, which have been given up by tenants on some estates and are now unlet, is due to the ill-advised attempts of the landlords to get an extreme rent for their land."

Mr. Druce, reporting as to the counties of Bedford, Bucks, Herts, Cambridge, Leicester, Suffolk, &c., says—

> "When so much arable land is either actually out of cultivation, or is only partially cultivated, and when, too, so much of that which is nominally in a state of cultivation is in such a foul and neglected state as much of the arable land in my district, I regret to say, is, the questions arise, can the land be brought back to a proper state of cultivation; and if so, how, and by whom?"

Coming back to the 25,000,000 acres unaccounted for, how many of these were cultivable with profit?—and this was not easy to arrive at. Mr. John Bailey Denton, in his evidence before the Royal Commission (6,325), stated the irreclaimable land in England and Wales at 4,722,100 acres, the cultivated land at 27,000,000 acres, and the uncultivated land "capable of improvement" at 5,596,600 acres. Professor Baldwin and Major Robertson, in their joint preliminary Report to the Royal Commission, affirmed "that there are 6,000,000 acres of land in Ireland comparatively worthless," and they declared that the greater part of that land ought to be cultivated, and could be profitably reclaimed. Professor Baldwin, in his evidence before the Duke of Richmond as to Ireland, said—

> "There has been a good deal of exaggeration with regard to the waste lands of Ireland. I have gone very carefully into the matter, and I do not believe that there are more than 1,500,000 acres of waste lands that would admit of reclamation; but there are at least 1,000,000 acres of bog lands in Ireland that would admit of reclamation."

and he added there was "at least three or four times that" of "semi-waste." These 4,000,000 acres of semi-waste Professor Baldwin thought could make provision for a large number of families if they were allowed to cultivate. Major Robertson agreed that there were large quantities of waste and semi-waste lands on which people might be profitably planted. For Scotland, he (Mr. Bradlaugh) had been unable to get any such total; but one witness stated that much land had recently been reclaimed in Caithness-shire, and there was an immense tract which might be reclaimed if the inducements were sufficient. Some years ago, in a discussion on a very valuable paper by Captain (now Admiral) Maxse, the waste land in this country cultivable with profit was guessed at about 11,000,000 acres. Personally, he (Mr. Bradlaugh) should put it at a higher figure; but he would assume that in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland the amount of land capable of cultivation, but uncultivated, exceeded 10,000,000 acres. The total cultivated acreage in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland at the present moment was about 47,750,000; so that if it were possible to throw into cultivation the 10,000,000 acres of good, but uncultivated land, there would be one-fifth more employment for the unemployed, and something like a reduction of one-fifth in the pauperism of the country, with an increase in like ratio of the land produce, and of the ability to contribute towards the local and Imperial fiscal burdens. To illustrate what might be done with land regarded as uncultivable, he would take the case of Penstrase Moor, familiar to all Members who had read the Report of the Royal Commission. That land, 478 acres in extent, looked in the highest degree uninviting. It had for surface-covering six inches of spar stone. The land belonged to the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Wellington Division of Somersetshire (Sir Thomas Dyke Acland), and was worthless. More generous than many landlords, though he (Mr. Bradlaugh) regarded the terms as disadvantageous to the cultivator, the right hon. Baronet allowed, at a nominal 5*s.* rent—really no rent, for this was spent in an annual dinner—a number of persons to have the opportunity of reclaiming it, in plots of from four acres to 10 acres. With what result? The surface stone was used to build cottages, and now 70 persons were living comfortably on land that before was desert. And Mr. Little, in his Report, says—

> "I was most agreeably surprised by the nature and condition of the homesteads. . . . . I found comfortable and substantial houses; . . . . nearly all the cottages had a gay little piece of flower-garden, and some had a number of fruit-trees. . . . . That this moor, once a barren waste, exhibits a great improvement, cannot be doubted; that the gross produce raised from it is very large is equally indisputable."

But this reclamation was effected under conditions which were really onerous. The land was let on lease for three lives, and the right hon. Baronet

> "permits a new life to be added, as one drops out, on payment of a fine, calculated on the existing value of the holding on the Carlisle tables at 4 per cent. Some of this 'worthless' land is now realising a gross produce of £10 per acre, not counting poultry or garden vegetables. The landlord has received in ten years for fines for renewals of leases no less than £1,087. He estimates the land which formerly paid no rent to be worth £1 per acre per annum."

Without intending attack on the right hon. Baronet, he (Mr. Bradlaugh) considered that too much of the profit resulting from the cultivator's energy was absorbed by those payments. He would now give an instance in which, instead of a comparatively generous landlord, the cultivators were at the tender mercies of the Duchy of Cornwall, and for this he would trouble the House with an extract from a private letter, the contents of which he had carefully verified—

> "South Tawton Common contains 2,634 acres, over about three-quarters of which the Duchy claims right as lord of the manor of Lydford. The other fourth belongs to a Mr. Fursdon, as lord of the manor of South Treal. There is no fence between; only a few stone posts mark the boundaries, so that cattle can go freely over the whole. In the Duchy's assumed rights there were inclosed 110 acres. The amount paid to the Duchy for the land was £55 7*s.*, and £2 2*s.* costs of conveyance. It appears that the incentive to this claim was the desire to rob the poor men, who had reclaimed the waste, of the fruits of their industry merely to enrich the Duchy revenue. There were on both rights 208 inclosures, the gross value of which was £223 18*s.* 9*d.*—rateable, £217 15*s.*; the smallest containing 9 poles, the largest 4a. 2r. 34p. The consideration paid for these reclamations when sold is a fair test of their value. About two years since 5a. 2r. 11p. was sold for £160, about £28 per acre; another containing 3r. 30p. was sold for £19 7*s.* 6*d.*; about a month since another containing 1a. 1r. was sold for £27. There had been no loss to the Duchy by these inclosures; for until the poor men had reclaimed the land the Duchy had never received anything from the commons. There are 96 acres inclosed on the Fursdon rights; but no demand has been made on the cultivators, and as most of the inclosures were made more than 12 years since it is not likely that Mr. Fursdon intends to make any claim. Such conduct bears a favourable contrast to the rapacity of the Duchy authorities. It was a credit to the commoners to give up their rights to benefit the industrious poor; but it was not to the credit of the Duchy to enforce so paltry a claim on the poorest of the community."

Mr. A. J. Kettle, in his evidence, illustrated the hindrance to reclamation in Ireland—

> "In the greater part of Mayo, and, in fact, all over the mountain and bog sides in Tipperary and Kerry, the land had been reclaimed by the tenants. . . . . They created property in a rude way, and the moment that it by means of their exertions furnished a crop, the landlords raised their rents from 1*s.* per acre to 2*s.* 6*d.* per acre, in order to reap a profit on it."

Describing Connaught, the Most Rev. Dr. Duggan said—

> "We have bogs and mountains unreclaimed; not only that, we have agricultural tenements not half tilled."

Mr. E. D. Leahy said—

> "There is no question that there is in Ireland a vast quantity of reclaimable land."

Mr. E. Murphy said—

> "I have seen large tracts in the South and West of Ireland where there might probably be a good deal of reclamation."

Mr. J. Hegarty stated to the Commission that a large quantity of land in Ireland might be made into productive land. It was, therefore, hardly to be wondered at that we had an Irish Land Question troubling us. The difficulties of reclaiming waste in Scotland were shown in the evidence of T. Elliott, a Selkirkshire farmer (38,493)—

> "I farmed for my father. He held 1,000 acres, with not a wall or drain upon it, and I reclaimed 800 acres of it, sub-divided it into fields of about 25 to 30 acres, with 5-feet stone walls. I drained it all pretty fairly, and made roads through it in different directions to gather in the crops, and drew lime for 25 miles to it, and improved it and made it good arable land, and we did not get a shilling from the landlord."

Again, as to some marsh land reclaimed at Holderness, Mr. Coleman said—

> "Although the tenant has drained a large portion of the land entirely at his own expense, and laid out much money in other works of a permanent character, he is a yearly tenant, and has not any security in the form of a tenant right on his outlay, so that he is liable to lose everything."

This was a question which did not simply affect the class he was seeking by his Bill to benefit; but it affected the whole of the labouring class throughout the United Kingdom, inasmuch as it would have the effect of raising their wages. It was impossible that men should try to redeem land for someone else; but they would make great efforts when they were increasing comfort for themselves and their children. He now came to the principle of his Bill which would most affront the notions of hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House. He submitted that the right of ownership ought to carry with it the duty of cultivation. In a crowded country like this, from which people were recommended to emigrate, a man who held land in an uncultivated state was guilty of an offence which, if not yet a legal, was certainly a moral offence, and an offence which the law ought to step in and deal with. He knew that the compulsory cultivation of land was said to be an unjust interference with the liberty of the subject. Why should it be so? At the present moment the non-cultivation of labour was a misdemeanour. Any able-bodied man who would not work might be treated as a rogue and vagabond, and sent to gaol. Why should not the law make the non-cultivation of land a misdemeanour too? The reason why it had not done so was plain. It was because the laws had been made by a House of Landlords, who considered their own pockets, and not the interests of the nation. Rights of property had in that House been everything; rights of life had been nothing. But now that the masses of the people were represented in that House discussions would take another tone; and it would have to be clearly understood that there would be from those who sat around him no recognition of rights of property which conflicted with rights of life. Unoccupied and unused land near great towns escaped the local rating; whilst its value for building purposes was enormously increased by the mere augmentation of population. Why should that land escape its proper burden any more than the labourer? There ought to be no doctrine of private property in land consistent with the retention of land in a state of waste. He held the doctrine that land should be compelled to contribute a full share of the local and Imperial burdens. All land in this country, he submitted, was held subject to the well-being of the State; and where the holding might technically, or otherwise, conflict with that well-being, it was not only the right, but the duty of the Legislature to deal with it. Mr. John Stuart Mill, in his *Political Economy* (Book 2, chap. ii., sec. 6), said—

> "Whenever, in any country, the proprietor, generally speaking, ceases to be the improver, political economy has nothing to say in defence of landed property as there established. In no sound theory of private property was it ever contemplated that the proprietor of land should be merely a sinecurist quartered upon it."

There is no right in land now known to English law that is not admittedly subject to the well-being of the State, as from time to time construed by Parliament; and if there be, at present, any such freehold right or privilege, Parliament ought not to permit its continuance. Land which could bear produce and did not, not only evaded its fair share of the local and Imperial burdens, but it denied to the dwellers about it occasions of earning an honest livelihood. If, as was probable, the produce of the present 47,750,000 acres of so-called cultivated land could be largely increased, and if some 10,000,000 or 12,000,000 acres of land, now uncultivated, could be forced into different kinds of cultivation, the effect in temporarily reducing the pauperism of the country would be magical; and if, at the same time, notions of prudential restraint could be encouraged amongst the newly-employed cultivators, the reduction of poverty and increase of happiness would be permanent. But then it was said that it would not pay to cultivate waste land; that land was already going out of cultivation; and that farms were being given up. That was too true; but what was the reason? He had already given it from Mr. Little and Mr. Druce, who were overwhelmingly corroborated. With reference to lands in Wiltshire which had gone out of cultivation, Mr. W. C. Little, Assistant Commissioner for the Southern District, said—

> "I cannot state any particular reason why those lands should go out of cultivation rather than others, except that the margin of profit on them is smaller than on others; and that, therefore, they are the first to go out of cultivation. The expenses of cultivation being large, and the returns being comparatively small, the margin between expenditure and receipts has gone, and consequently the land has gone out of cultivation. Of course, where a landlord is in a position to cultivate his own land, he may prefer to do it for a time at a loss, with the hope of things recovering; on the other hand, the landlord may not be in a position, or may not care to cultivate his land, and that land goes out of cultivation."

According to the doctrine of Lord Beaconsfield, there were three classes who must subsist on the land—namely, the landlords, the tenant farmers, and the cultivators. In that Bill he (Mr. Bradlaugh) challenged that doctrine. In his belief the discussion begun that afternoon would have to be continued until the principle of the Bill was accepted. If land would not keep the landlord, the tenant farmer, and the cultivator, it would, at all events, keep the cultivator; and in such a case the landlord ought not to be allowed to let it remain uncultivated and absolutely useless to anyone. If the land would not keep the three classes, it had better keep one of them than none. It was urged that the land now uncultivated could not be cultivated with profit—that was, that it would not keep landlord, tenant farmer, and labourer; that the farmer could not pay rent and wages, and escape ruin. That was very likely quite true; but if, at present, the land lay idle because it could not keep three, and if that land, cultivated, would find life for one who was now added to the ranks of the starving unemployed, then preference and opportunity for existence should be given to the one. The uncultivated area benefits neither the landlord, the tenant farmer, nor the State; in the hands of the willing tenant cultivator it would benefit him immediately and individually, and the State generally and certainly. That was a simple proposition. His views might be revolutionary—he could not help that—but, at all events, they were not novel, because in China, for some thousands of years, it had been the law that every person holding cultivable land in an uncultivated state should be imprisoned, and that his land should be taken from him; and, moreover, the Board of Land Commissioners, if in their opinion the land was not cultivated up to its full value, were empowered to flog the proprietor. He had always been a disciple of the late Member for Leicester (Mr. P. A. Taylor) in his hostility to flogging, and he had not introduced that into his Bill. As regarded the clauses of the Bill, he had only proposed to make the measure apply to agricultural land. But, from the information which had reached him, it was clear that there was very much cultivable land now uncultivated which would not be reached by the Bill. Besides that, he had now information as to reclaimable land in the Black Country, which was certainly not agricultural land. Huge unsightly heaps disfigured the country as pit spoil and rubbish heaps. The lords of the manors had pocketed the compensation for injury to the surface, which was paid to them in order that the surface over which the poor had rights might be restored to its original condition; and when the workings ceased they had left the heaps unlevelled and the holes unfilled. He had been astonished to find that much of this was cultivable, and he had instances of its cultivation with profit; but the Black Country difficulty would not be reached by his Bill, which was incomplete in many other respects. For instance, it proposed to confer certain powers on the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, whereas he himself should greatly prefer that they should be conferred on the Local Authorities; and he had hoped that a general Bill for local self-government would have constituted such Local Authority everywhere. He agreed that it would be an evil to increase centralization on such a question, which would be better dealt with by the several Local Authorities. The 25 years' payment to the evicted landowner should be calculated on the average annual net actual produce, such payments as for deer forest rents not being reckoned. He would authorize the Local Authorities to let on such terms as would encourage the cultivator to develop his best energy in rendering the land profitable, and would increase the term, without increasing the rent, where improvement had been made, so that the cultivator and the then living members of his family might reap the fruits of the cultivator's industry and energy. He did not propose that the land should be sold by the authorities to the cultivator, but only let to him. He was against any attempt at sudden wholesale nationalization of land. It could only be effected by purchase, for which they had not the means; or by force, for the use of which he could not find justification. But in his opinion, whenever land came into the possession of the State, the freehold, as it was termed, should never again be parted with, but the land should be let to the man who would make the best use of it; and the more a man improved his holding the longer should he be permitted to occupy it. He would authorize the Local Authorities to make advances to those who desired to make improvements on their land. In China eight or nine men became jointly and severally bound for one to enable him to cultivate, and it would not be harmful if in our higher civilization there was more solidarity. There ought to be no difficulty in Local Authorities making small advances at low rates with reasonable safety. In conclusion, he prayed the House to pardon his rude and rough attempt to bring this question under their notice, and to assent to the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

Mr. LLOYD (Wednesbury), in opposing the Motion, said, the question was, what was waste land in the eyes of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh)? He had not told them. Was it land that was only producing a low amount of produce? Almost all land was in some degree of cultivation, unless it was inaccessible rocky mountain, which, of course, the hon. Member could not mean. He (Mr. Lloyd) urged that cultivation was one of degree. Some land was used for sheep walks, which produced very little, only about 5*s*. an acre; other inclosed land was used for pasturage, which produced probably £4 an acre, and arable land, in corn crops, would produce more than £10 an acre. Hon. Members were quite content, and even advocated putting down land to pasture, which was a loss of more than £6 an acre in produce per year; yet they professed great anxiety to force barren and poor lands into cultivation, even though the admitted gain was not nearly so great as keeping their present cultivated lands in a higher state of cultivation. The hon. Member for Northampton had made a very great omission in not stating what would be the probable financial gain if those barren lands were brought into cultivation; he had not told them the present condition of those unclaimed lands, or what use he considered could be made of them. That he should have done; it was the very gist of the question. What would be the value of his proposal to the country? It was a serious omission. As the hon. Member had not given them any figures, he (Mr. Lloyd) would make an estimate. If all the 10,000,000 acres could be cultivated which had been referred to—and which it was well known was quite impossible—and supposing that they could be made to produce £4 10*s*. an acre more than they did now, that would give a gain to the country of £45,000,000 per annum, and would help the labour market very largely. He would, and did, support all justifiable means to obtain such a result. The hon. Member's mode of encouraging the cultivation of land was to put increased imposts upon it in the shape of taxes, and to enforce penal penalties upon owners which would check money being invested in land—both which measures would retard rather than encourage the better cultivation of their land. He would ask the House, how could they expect more land to be brought into cultivation, when the present ownership and cultivation of land was so unprofitable? It was now quite out of fashion to consider the agricultural interest as worth anything. During the past few years the average annual produce of land in this country had fallen to the extent of £4 10*s*. per acre. That on 47,840,977 acres of cultivated land in the United Kingdom equalled a loss in the annual value of the products from our lands of £215,284,396. If £20,000,000 of that loss had fallen on their landlords, the remaining £195,000,000 had fallen on the labour classes, and had taken away the wage fund each year to that extent. One of the reasons for that serious fall in prices was the bad state of trade in their cities and in their manufacturing centres; and so they could not buy so freely from the country. Then, again, the country districts, earning less money, could not buy so many manufactures from the towns, and that, again, had increased the depression in the towns. The fact was that the trade of the towns and the country districts were very closely dovetailed together. If bringing 10,000,000 acres of barren land into cultivation would improve the wage fund of our people £45,000,000 a-year, the higher cultivation of the land now in cultivation would give an increased wage fund of more than £195,000,000 per annum—a most important matter to the working classes of this country. It would certainly be very difficult to get poor and waste lands into cultivation, when good land now under the plough was going out of cultivation. The fact was that, instead of trying to force additional land into cultivation by alterations in the law, Parliament ought to endeavour to create a market for the produce of the cultivated land, by stimulating the trade and industries of the cities and large manufacturing centres by looking after their trade. He contended that, in order to give effect to such a Bill as that before the House, public money would have to be provided for the purpose of cultivating these waste, barren, and poor lands. Would such a proposal as that be acceptable to the House? What was required to be done was to endeavour to improve the general prosperity of the country. The hon. Member who had introduced the Bill had spoken somewhat hardly of the landlords; but the landlords were not the cause of the land getting out of cultivation. It was to be accounted for by the extremely low price of produce, hence it did not pay to grow it. Again, it seemed a very strange doctrine that the produce of the land should be imported from abroad without taxation, while the land in this country was so heavily taxed, which was indirectly taxing the food produced in this country. The way to get the land cultivated was to take off some of the taxes. Putting increased taxes on land was taxing food, to which he was opposed. He was most anxious himself to see the waste land reclaimed; but he did not think the Bill before the House would effect that object.

Mr. JACKS (Leith, &c.) said, the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had entirely mistaken the scope of the Bill. It had nothing to do with land intended for building purposes, but, purely and simply, with land that could be cultivated. He (Mr. Jacks) wished respectfully to protest against the custom that was prevailing in this House of introducing Party considerations when they were considering questions of this kind. In the great debate that was concluded last night he, like many new Members, had been greatly pained by the introduction of that element; and he was sure that one of the sources of satisfaction and pride which they all felt in British statesmen when the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) sat down was that he had left out of his speech every reference to Party strife. He (Mr. Jacks), therefore, protested against the introduction by the hon. Member for Wednesbury of purely Party questions when they were considering the question of the land.

Mr. LLOYD said, the question he mentioned was not a Party, but a national question.

Mr. JACKS submitted that the hon. Gentleman did bring in considerations which were usually credited, at all events, to be the opinions of hon. Gentlemen on the Liberal side of the House. If the hon. Gentleman wished to know what land was available for cultivation, let him do what many of them had done, go through the country and see what it said for itself. In company with another hon. Gentleman sitting on the other side of the House he (Mr. Jacks) made a journey such as he suggested, and in the Midlands of Scotland they found hundreds and thousands of acres, which had formerly been under cultivation, now merely sporting lands, or sheep walks. The necessary consequence was, as they found, that not only cottages, but whole hamlets, which were formerly the homes of a happy and industrious people, were now deserted and cheerless; and, leaving, as they did, a crowded city, with people starving and begging for work—he did not know how it might appear to hon. Gentlemen who said that this land brought so much an acre as sporting lands, or so much an acre for sheep pastures more than it would do if it were under cultivation—he could only say he could not repress from his mind the words of a very high authority—"Much food is in the tillage of the poor, and there is that which is destroyed for lack of judgment;" and it was because they felt that that land was being destroyed for lack of judgment, and that the tillage of the poor was not being brought to it, that they very earnestly endeavoured to put forward any measure that would bring land within the cultivation of the poor. Reference had been made to the unemployed in the cities. He said, frankly, he was not in favour of getting these hundreds and thousands of people, so often referred to as the unemployed, out of the country. Every man connected with manufactures knew that whenever an improvement took place in trade the country was not over-populated; but they found that they could not get men for love or money to do their work. They found, on one side, hundreds and thousands of acres of land hungering and thirsting for the hand of the husbandman, and, on the other side, hundreds and thousands of men starving for want of work; and he said it was their bounden duty to endeavour to assist any Bill that would bring those two together. As to the Bill now before the House, he should vote against it, for the simple reason that it was simply taking a penknife to dig down a mountain; that it touched the fringe only of the matter, and did not deal with it in a straightforward, manly, and competent manner.

Mr. TYSSEN AMHERST (Norfolk, S.W.) said, he thought that the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had himself condemned his own Bill. The hon. Member had not enlightened the House upon a part of the question upon which they were most anxious to be enlightened; and that was how to make the land pay, not only for a landlord or occupier, but even for the cultivator himself. A good deal had been said of the rent payable for land. At the beginning of the century a great many of the sheep-walks were broken up, so that more labour might be employed upon the land. It was also, no doubt, a great advantage at the time, both to the owner and the occupier; but now that land, to the extent of thousands of acres, had had its fertility worked out. It was only in the upper sod that the fertility of centuries had been collected, and now much of this land might be found showing very little, if any, fertility. He should like to know if any means could be found for tilling that land with a profit, even if no rent at all were charged for it. The hon. Member had spoken of the great extent of land lying untilled. That was exactly one of those matters on which the House needed more specific information than seemed at present obtainable. He could not think that, at this crisis, there were any landlords who were willing to let their land lie waste as long as they could get any rent at all for it, or cultivate it themselves at a profit. He knew that in his own county of Norfolk there was some land cultivated that paid no profit at all. As to labourers' allotments, he believed that so long as they could get a quarter or a half of an acre of land each, close to their cottages, they would not wish to have more land, but would rather depend upon daily wages. The hon. Member in bringing forward this Bill, had not grappled with the real difficulty at all.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Broadhurst) (Birmingham, Bordesley) said, he hoped that, under the circumstances, his hon. Friend (Mr. Bradlaugh) would agree to the withdrawal of the Bill. His hon. Friend, who had brought it in strongly criticized it himself, and had shown that it did not properly put before the House his own desires on the subject. In so far as the hon. Gentleman had given them instances of the success attending the efforts to bring into cultivation land which had previously been thought quite incapable of cultivation, he had done a service to the House and the country. The instance he had mentioned in Devonshire was full of interest, and there was no doubt that, under similar circumstances, much other land might also be successfully brought under the spade, if not the plough. If hon. Gentlemen had read the Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, they must have seen another case in Cornwall, where land, thought to be perfectly worthless, had been hired for at a very small cost per acre, and had in the course of a few years become worth £5 or £6, through the success of personal interest and industry. It had been reclaimed from a wild state by a small capitalist, who had built cottages for the residents on it, and it had well repaid the labour of a considerable proportion of people. As he had said, in so far as his hon. Friend had raised this question he had done a good service, and he had no doubt the House would hear a good deal more of it in the future than in the past. Having succeeded in obtaining a very interesting and useful discussion, the hon. Member might be disposed now to be content with that discussion, and to consent to the withdrawal of the Bill.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North - West) said, that though the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had introduced his Bill in courteous terms, he had not treated the House with due respect; because he had admitted that the real object he had in view was to make a speech on proposals which were not contained in his Bill. But it was not fair to the House of Commons, or to the country, and he would have better served the poor people, whose cause he professed a desire to advance, if, instead of laying this impracticable measure before the House, he had consulted with others who might have been able to assist him in framing a Bill that might have some favourable consideration. The House might have given a little deeper study to the question of how it was that land was going out of cultivation, instead of reflecting upon the conduct of the landlords, who, under the most trying and critical circumstances in the present serious state of affairs in regard to agriculture, had endeavoured, to the best of their ability, to do their duty by their tenantry and their labourers, as well as themselves. Did the hon. Gentleman suppose, for a moment, that there were landlords so foolish, so stupid, or so ignorant, as not to get men to cultivate their land, even at the barest profit, if they could do so, rather than put money into the soil themselves which they had never a chance of regaining? When the hon. Member came down to that House, and asked it to condemn, as guilty of a misdemeanour, men who were striving to the best of their means and knowledge to do their duty, he was going beyond the latitude permissible to an hon. Member. He hoped the hon. Member would find, from further consideration of the subject, that, with all their faults, landlords had some good qualities, and that in the past, as in the future, their object was to maintain the honour, dignity, and welfare of this great Empire. The hon. Member had not taken into account the waste land of Wales, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, used for pastoral purposes. Did the hon. Member wish to suggest that the land should be ploughed up and used for spade labour? How was the hon. Gentleman going to finance the poor men he would establish on the land? In Birmingham, it appeared, their great object was to place on the land the large amount of surplus population that had got into the towns. Unless the hon. Member was going to finance these people, to supply them with money, he could not place them on the land with the slightest hope of success. No doubt, near towns, the land might be able to pay under this sort of cultivation. There were hardly any landlords who were not ready to let his land for that purpose. [Mr. Bradlaugh dissented.] The hon. Member shook his head, but if he would read the Allotments Committee's Report he would see that that was the fact. At present more than one-third of the labourers had allotments; and, therefore, it was not fair to say that the landlords were not endeavouring to help the labouring classes in that way. In conclusion, he was glad to gather that the hon. Member did not intend to press the second reading of the Bill. If, however, he had intended to proceed with it, he (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) would have moved that it be read a second time that day six months.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, that that Bill was proposed in the interests of those who wished to be cultivators of the soil, rather than in the interest of the landlords. It had been asked by the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) whether the landlords were perfect fools. He (Mr. Labouchere) was sorry to say that many of them were fools. With regard to the possibility of land being cultivable at a profit, there was a very great difference between persons cultivating land at a profit so as to pay rent to the landlord, and cultivating it so as to get a living for themselves from it. The object of his hon. Friend was to bring land that was now uncultivated into cultivation, for it could not be denied that there was a large amount of land held by landowners which was not under cultivation, and which might be cultivated. He did not hold that the landlord had an absolute right to rent from land; the only right he possessed was either to cultivate it himself, or to see that it was cultivated by others; and his right should lapse after a certain time if the land was not cultivated. It was just because landlords had lost their power in that House, he was glad to say, that his hon. Friend was able to bring in such a Bill and to receive for it the support from many parts of the House which it had obtained. It was said that some land could not be cultivated so as to yield to the landlord a rent of 5*s.* an acre. Then let him take off the 5*s.* per acre. Some hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to think that they had got a Divine right to rent; but rent was only the margin that was left after payment of the taxes due to the State, and after the cultivator had been enabled to live and thrive on the land. The sooner the landlords got rid of the notion that the State was going to enable them to get rent, the better it would be for them. So far as the State was concerned it did not matter at all whether a single shilling of rent was paid to the landlord or not; and he himself thought it would be a very good thing if land went down to such a point, unless under very exceptional circumstances, that there should be no rent at all, for he did not know in what way the State, or anyone else excepting the landlord, benefited by that tax upon agricultural industry. Landowners in the past had had it all their own way. He agreed with the Under Secretary of State for the Home Departmen (Mr. Broadhurst) that it would be better for his hon. Friend to withdraw the Bill. Although he (Mr. Labouchere) had endorsed it himself as far as it went, he thought it did not go far enough. He was, in fact, almost shocked that his hon. Colleague had not gone considerably further in the direction aimed at by the Bill; but he would advise him to be satisfied with the amount of support that he had received that day, as also with the sympathy that had been shown for the objects of the measure, and to bring it in again, on another opportunity, in a somewhat more drastic form, including in its provisions urban, as well as agricultural, land, which they did not at present deal with. He believed that not many years would elapse before such a Bill and other measures of a similar character were passed by Parliament.

Mr. MAGNIAC (Bedford, N., Biggleswade) said, he thought a Bill of this kind ought to have been brought in by a Member who had some practical knowledge of the cultivation of land. He was also sorry to see that the hon. Member (Mr. Bradlaugh) had been compelled to resort to China for illustrations in support of his proposals. Now, he thought there was no need to go to that country for an example in the matter, because the law there operated very cruelly against the cultivators of the soil. It was not for the benefit of the people in general of that country that the punishments referred to by the hon. Member (Mr. Bradlaugh) were inflicted, but for the benefit of the officials who imposed them. There were hundreds of thousands of acres at present under cultivation, which were being cultivated in Great Britain at the expense of the proprietors, who had to defray the cost of the buildings, the drainage, and the roads. In numberless instances the proprietors were not deriving a single shilling of interest upon the capital which they had invested in land. The instances which the hon. Member had cited as successful instances of the cultivation of waste lands were quite exceptional. The principles of some hon. Members were being carried too far, and were doing a great deal of harm; and there were many points in the Bill which betrayed much ignorance of agricultural matters, and showed that its author had not carefully considered the question it raised. The House would receive with gratitude any well-considered measure dealing with the subject, which would be shared by the landowners throughout the Kingdom; but he did not think the Bill could be regarded as a well-considered measure for that purpose.

Viscount GRIMSTON (Herts, St. Albans) said, in opposing the Bill, that the landlords must have felt indebted to the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) for his great kindness in not having introduced into his Bill a clause to import into our laws the personal castigation of land cultivators, which appeared to find a place in the law relating to Chinese agriculture. He entirely disagreed from the view which the hon. Member took of the feeling and position of landowners. The hon. Member had spoken somewhat harshly of the landlord class, and he (Viscount Grimston) was afraid that his language would tend to set the agricultural labourers against that class. The fact that he had been himself returned to that House by a constituency of agricultural labourers was in itself a sufficient refutation of many of the remarks of the hon. Member. The senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) had expressed his regret that the Bill did not go further; but did the hon. Member desire that it should be in the power of any person to confiscate the house of a householder who could not reside in it all the year round himself? Did the introducer of the Bill intend that all parks, demesne lands, and grass lands should be broken up by the plough, and put to use as arable land? The financial difficulties in the way of carrying out the proposals of the Bill would entirely prevent any possibility of its doing any good; the agricultural labourer would not have the capital to cultivate the land which it was proposed to intrust to him. The Bill, in fact, was iniquitous, and should not be entertained for a moment. He maintained that its operation would be mischievous, that it would do no good to the labourers, that it would harm the landlords, and that it would be injurious to the country. Some of its clauses, and especially the 3rd, he considered, amounted to a simple act of robbery. He would ask how the case of a man unable to find a tenant would be dealt with under such legislation, for it was often best to keep a farm unoccupied for a-year, in order to find a suitable tenant? No man would be such a fool as to allow his land to go out of cultivation if he could get any rent at all, and he knew cases in which landlords had let the land at no rent at all rather than let it remain uncultivated. For instance, his father had been obliged to let land in Essex at one third of the rent it produced 10 years ago.

Mr. ARCH (Norfolk, N.W.) said, he very much regretted that the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) was about to withdraw his Bill; but, perhaps, after the intimation conveyed by the Government, he was quite right in doing so. Hon. Gentlemen who had spoken on the Bill did not know much of the state of the Land Question, for they had no acquaintance with it; but he thought that the House would not say that he had no experience of the land. It was quite true that numbers of gentlemen who owned land in this country let out land to agricultural labourers. If hon. Gentlemen who held the land were right in their statement, that the land would not pay for cultivation, it was putting labourers in a very invidious position. But he had reason to know that the rent paid for the pieces of land let out to agricultural labourers was as much as £4 or £5 an acre, while the tenant-farmers were only charged from 25*s.* to 35*s.* an acre. He thought that the question of making the land pay ought not to stand in the way of something being done to bring the land of the country into cultivation. Recently, they had seen, in London, a very terrible outbreak of rioting and disorder; but there were causes which accounted for it, if traced to its origin. They would find that behind it all was poverty and want, which would not exist if the land were properly cultivated and tilled. If that were done, many thousands of starving men would be taken out of the towns to go back to the country, where they would become customers to the manufacturers and food-producers for the people. Thus, the distress prevailing in the large towns would be relieved, and, instead of having 10 or 15 cottages standing empty in every village, they would have healthy men and healthy families, increasing the wealth of the country instead of pauperizing it. Pauperism was one thing they all deplored; but as long as they had thousands and tens of thousands of acres lying dormant, they would always have pauperism in their midst. If a man ceased to live, for instance, in a house for 12 months, in London, it would be very bad for the owner of that house; but where one acre of land only was thrown out of cultivation, it was so much taken from the whole produce of the soil. Mr. James Howard, who was a good authority upon agricultural questions—[*Laughter*]—hon. Members might laugh, but he (Mr. Arch) considered him one of the most practical agriculturists in the country. He had stated that the land might produce some £60,000,000 a-year more in the value of food, if a proper system of cultivation were pursued. That being the present state of affairs, he did not see that there was anything wrong, or anything confiscatory, in proposing a measure, by which the wealth of the country could be raised for the benefit of all, and to the detriment of none. The noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Grimston), who opposed the Bill, said that he had been returned to this House by the votes of agricultural labourers. Well, agricultural labourers had sent him (Mr. Arch) also to that House; and he did not happen to be a Viscount; he was only a labourer. During the past winter, there had been thousands of men belonging to the land doing nothing, because the land was lying idle. They might be told that the principle of the Bill before the House was an interference with the rights of property. Well, he considered that no man had a right to do what he liked with his own, except that which was right. Take the sanitary laws. For instance, no man could be permitted to commit a nuisance adjoining another man's dwelling. The Sanitary Inspector was authorized to interfere, because the law would not allow that to be done which was injurious to another person's health. If a landlord, like the dog in the manger, would not allow the people to cultivate the soil, and would not do it himself, the law should step in and say —"If you will not till it, somebody else must." If it was wrong to commit a nuisance to the injury of a neighbour, it was also wrong to restrict the labour of starving men. He (Mr. Arch) did not wish to waste the time of the House with any further remarks; but he desired to say, in conclusion, that the pauperism they had in the towns was owing to the fact that there were now 80,000 less men upon the land than there were 10 or 15 years ago. If the God-created machine for cultivating the land were removed from it, they must expect the present deplorable state of things. The means of arresting poverty and of keeping the labourer on the soil was the proper cultivation of it. There were thousands of men who would only be too glad to cultivate the land, in order to grow their own food, but they were not permitted to do so. Even if the Government were to spend a few thousands in putting labourers to work upon the soil, it would be a far less reprehensible expenditure than that which had been incurred by former Governments in unjust wars. While millions of money were wasted in wars, not a single million to enable the poor people to get a hold of the land could be expended. Whenever and on whatever occasion such a Bill as that now before the House was brought in, he would support it. It had been said that the agricultural labourer had not got the capital to cultivate the land; but, at all events, the labourer had earned it, if he had not got it. The agricultural labourers had now a different position to what they formerly held, for their wants would now crave attention from those whose votes sent them to Parliament. He hoped the day was not far distant—and he would buoy the agricultural labourer up with the hope—when the rights of the agricultural labourer to live on the soil would not be denied, and he trusted to God that the time would soon arrive.

Mr. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) said, he did not oppose this Bill, because it was specially designed to acquire land in the manner described by the hon. Member for North-West Norfolk (Mr. Arch), but because it was an interference with natural laws. If land was to be dealt with in the manner proposed by the Bill now before the House, why should not the many looms now lying idle in Lancashire be dealt with in a similar manner? If an hon. Member were to bring in a Bill that day dealing with land, why should there not be another Bill brought in to-morrow, proposing to put into operation the looms in Lancashire, which it would not now pay to work? Some 30 or 40 years ago it was said, by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Bradlaugh), that the House of Commons was chiefly composed of landlords; and from that the inference was drawn, that opportunity was taken by members of that class to get possession of many acres of commons and add them to their estates. He (Mr. Lawrence) would point out that the Members of the House of Commons in these days were largely composed of Liberals, who represented the interests of the lowest classes of the community. It was not private greed that led those Gentlemen to permit those commons to be taken; but a desire to have the land cultivated, with a view to getting as much as possible out of the waste lands for the benefit of the whole community. That was the reason why portions of the commons became property. That principle had been upheld for a long time; but, now, it was discarded, because of the influx of foreign food, which cut away the basis of that principle. Then there was another point to which he should like to refer, and that was the real desire among landlords to let their land, for they were now quite as anxious as anyone that their land should be cultivated, and regretted that it should be uncultivated. It was difficult now to let land, and there was a real desire on their part to do so. As an instance of that, he might mention that, a few evenings ago, he was talking to a friend who came as a visitor to that House. His friend told him that he was very hard up, and that he was the owner of a property in Buckinghamshire which formerly brought him a rental of £1,800, but that now he could hardly get £200 out of it. That was a fair index to what extent the landlords were now anxious to have their land cultivated. It was certain that the same desire that had influenced the landlords to inclose some of the commons in the past, would induce them to get as much money as they possibly could by renting that land to the labourers now.

Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.) said, the House was indebted to the hon. Member who brought the Bill forward, for his interesting speech; but the object, probably, was to ventilate the subject, rather than to carry the Bill. There was uncultivated land in the country, and the idea was to call attention to the fact that part of this land could be cultivated with advantage to the country. He would suggest that when the Government came to deal with the Land Question, so far as the agricultural community interested in allotments and small holdings were concerned, they should deal also with the question raised by the Bill. He recognized the good intentions of the Mover of the Bill, but some of its proposals would never do. For instance, it would be absurd to create a new penal offence such as the Bill suggested.

Mr. LONG (Wilts, Devizes) said, that, no doubt, from the hon. Member for Northampton's (Mr. Labouchere's) point of view, the Bill was aimed at the landlords; but he believed the intended object of the Bill was a larger and better one. There was land out of cultivation, and the object of the Bill was to have it cultivated; but while admitting that a great grievance was constituted by the fact that, in some parts of the country, land had been allowed to go out of cultivation which might have been made to contribute to the wealth and comfort of the people living in those localities, he (Mr. Long) doubted whether the placing on the Statute Book of any such measure as that under consideration would effect the object which the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had in view. It would pay a landlord to keep his land in cultivation, and what the House should do was to facilitate the cultivation of land, or, rather, to increase the profit attending the cultivation of land. The question of rent was no answer to agricultural distress; and he agreed, where land was let to agricultural labourers on fair terms, the result was satisfactory. Indeed, his experience was, that where land was so let they were as good tenants and as regular payers as any tenants in the country. He regretted that, in the discussion, hon. Members opposite had exhibited a feeling that they themselves monopolized the desire to benefit the agricultural labourer, and to suggest that the Conservative Party were only desirous to guard the interests of the landlords, and to destroy the interests of the agricultural labourer. He denied that, and he also denied the charge that the landlords, as a body, were opposed to the system of small holdings, or that they had not advocated the adoption of that system until the agricultural labourer had the franchise. The latter charge was unworthy of notice; but, as to the former, he knew that many landlords were willing to let small plots of land to labourers; and, for his part, he sincerely hoped that, in some form or other, they would have legislation which would facilitate the letting of land for allotments. There was no scarcity of land. Plenty of land was in the market, but there were no purchasers for it. He desired to know what the hon. Member for North-West Norfolk (Mr. Arch) meant, by saying that if the labourers had no capital, they had earned it?

Mr. ARCH: I should like to ask the hon. Gentleman, who earns the landlord his rent? Every time rent has been raised, wages have been lowered.

Mr. LONG said, that was no answer to his question. It was impossible to avoid the conclusion that the proposal appeared to be rather intended, by some hon. Members opposite, to make Party capital than to promote the real interest of the classes interested in the question. Did the hon. Member mean to assert that they had done work, for which they were not paid; or, was he merely alluding to the allegation that they had not been sufficiently paid for their work? With regard to the question of wages, he should be glad to see the agricultural labourers earning better wages; but that result would not be attained by measures of this kind. The hon. Member thought that money might be lent to the labourers, on the same principle as it had been lent to the landlords. Most earnestly, however, would he advise the labourers not to follow the unfortunate example of landlords who had borrowed money on that system, and who had to pay heavy interest on that money without deriving any of the advantages they had anticipated.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) said, he considered that the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had done good service to the community by bringing on that Land Question for discussion, as it was a question of vital interest to the community at large, upon the solution of which depended, in a large measure, the prosperity of the country. It was, however, a question which could not be settled with regard to the interests of the landowners alone. The interests of the public at large must also be taken into account; for any settlement, which did not take the public interest into account, would be utterly inadequate and futile. As there were 35,000,000 of persons in that country, only half of whom could be supplied with food grown in the country, he thought it was self-evident that the tillers of the soil need not suffer from any scarcity of markets for their produce. As to any question of levying a duty upon agricultural produce, he assured hon. Members opposite that it was an idle dream. Whatever else might be done, there would never be a tax again put on the food of the people. The days of protective duties were gone, and gone for ever. What agriculturists should do was to apply their minds to solving, in a practical way, the problem of how to produce more food from the land. For his own part, he believed that much good would not be done in that direction, till the land came to be treated on commercial principles. Then he had not the slightest doubt that the value of the land would go up, and the amount of the produce from the land would be considerably increased. He had the authority of Lord Derby for saying that the land at the present time did not produce more than half what it ought to do; and he (Mr. Cossham) contended that the way to make it produce more was to bring more labour upon it; and more labour would be brought upon the land, if it were let out in smaller lots; and, also, of course, the bringing of more land into cultivation, by inclosure, would add to the production of the country, and increase the amount of labour required upon the land. And there was another important side to the question. The employment of increased labour upon the land would act beneficially for the country in two ways. In the first place, it would be the means of greatly increasing the home food production for the people, and thereby rendering the country less dependent upon foreign sources of supply, and it would, at the same time, tend to increase the value of labour, by increasing the demand for it. From every point of view, therefore, the solution of the Land Question was a matter of the most vital importance to the country.

Mr. MORE (Shropshire, Ludlow) said, that, practically, a holding could not be prepared under an expense of £300; and although landowners had spent very large sums in improving their properties, he did not think there were many who could spend an unlimited amount of such sums in making small holdings. He thought that the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), in calling attention to the amount of land uncultivated, should not have omitted to call attention to the large amount that had been brought into cultivation of late years. He was of opinion that the Government ought to lend money to the agricultural labourers to enable them to cultivate their allotments, otherwise they would not be able to cultivate them successfully.

Sir EDMUND LECHMERE (Worcestershire, Bewdley) said, he had some experience of small holdings, and he could not think that their success was such that farm labourers ought to be encouraged to embark in them. What was best for them was that they should obtain garden allotments close to their cottages. It was his opinion that the providing of small holdings must be left to private enterprize. Last year a meeting was held of Members of all political Parties, with the object of establishing some means for providing small holdings for those who were desirous of entering upon the cultivation of land in a small way, and the result was the establishment of the Small Farm and Labourers' Company; and he could not but think that if this Land Company, which had already divided and let an estate of 400 acres in small holdings, should prove to be a success, it would be followed by the establishment of various other Companies with the same object in view. But if land were to be cut up into allotments and small holdings, for the purpose of being cultivated by men in towns, as well as by agricultural labourers, something must be done to educate such men, so that they might understand the work which they had to do; and if they were to be educated we must have agricultural schools. He, therefore, considered it to be well worthy of the attention of the Legislature whether a Commission should not be appointed to take into consideration the whole question of small holdings; and he thought, moreover, that it would be well that agricultural schools should be formed throughout the country, in which men desiring to take small holdings should be able to obtain such an education on agricultural subjects as would enable them to cultivate their land with success. In conclusion, he would express his conviction that if the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had done nothing else by the introduction of the Bill, he had given an opportunity for the discussion of the important matters involved, and such discussion, he (Sir Edmund Lechmere) believed, would not be without good result.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, he would take the advice of his hon. Friend (Mr.

Mr. More

Broadhurst), and would ask leave to withdraw the Bill.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Bill *withdrawn.*

SOLICITORS' ANNUAL CERTIFICATE DUTY BILL.—[Bill 133.]

(*Mr. O'Hea, Mr. Deasy, Mr. Dwyer Gray, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Sexton.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. O'Hea.*)

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, that it was a Bill which seriously affected the Revenue, and as his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended to make his Budget Statement to-morrow, he begged to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned," —(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

BEER ADULTERATION (No. 3) BILL.

(*Mr. Birkbeck, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Charles Hall, Mr. Fellowes, Mr. Joseph Cowen.*)

[Bill 59.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Debate arising;

Debate *adjourned* till *Wednesday* 12th May.

MOTIONS.

——o——

MEDICAL ACT (1858) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Morgan Howard, Bill to amend "The Medical Act, 1858," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Morgan Howard, Sir Trevor Lawrence, Mr. Tomlinson, and Mr. Addison.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 183.]

FIRES PREVENTION (METROPOLIS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Howard Spensley, Bill for the better Prevention of Fires within the Metropolis, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Howard Spensley, Colonel Duncan, Mr. Spicer and Mr. Isaacs.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 184.]

QUARRY FENCING BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Thomas Blake, Bill to provide for the Fencing of Quarries, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Burt, Mr. Cobb, and Mr. Abraham (Glamorgan).

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 185.]

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 15*th April*, 1886.

MINUTES.] — SELECT COMMITTEE — Private Bills (Standing Order No. 128), *nominated.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Copyhold Enfranchisement * (76); Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment) * (77); Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act (1855) Amendment (78).

Second Reading—Bankruptcy (Agricultural Labourers' Wages) (70).

Committee — Report — Cape Race Lighthouse * (60).

Report—Trees (Ireland) * (72-79); Poor Relief (Ireland) * (74).

Third Reading — Lunacy Acts Amendment (64); Lunacy (Vacating of Seats) * (47-80); Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) * (69); Marriages (Hours of Solemnization) * (73); Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland) * (36), and *passed.*

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER NO. 128).

Moved, That the following Lords be named of the Select Committee :—

L. Chancellor.	L. Houghton.
M. Salisbury.	L. Watson.
E. Morley.	L. Bramwell.
E. Northbrook.	L. Hillingdon.
E. Redesdale	L. Grimthorpe.

Agreed to (*The Lord Houghton*).

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 64.) THIRD READING.

Bill read 3^a (according to Order).

On Motion, "That the Bill do pass,"

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, that objection had been taken, in a Petition presented from the Corporation of Newcastle, to the clause which empowered the building or creation of private asylums. In his opinion, the clause was not one which was likely to involve the Local Authorities in any any pecuniary obligation or loss. He thought that, on the whole, the power which was given would be found advantageous rather than the reverse, from a pecuniary point of view. He felt however, that there might be some reasonable grounds for the objection taken, that whereas power was given to the Justices to determine whether such buildings should be erected, or whether they should take part in such erection, the administration of the funds in towns was vested in the Town Councils. He proposed to move an Amendment, to provide that where these asylums were to be erected for paying patients as well as non-paying patients, the powers of the Bill should not be exercised in municipal boroughs, except with the consent of the Town Council. There were some other Amendments to be proposed, which, however, were merely formal.

Amendments made.

Bill *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

BANKRUPTCY (AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' WAGES) BILL.

(*The Earl of Harrowby.*)

(NO. 70.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that its object was to remedy a defect in the Bankruptcy Act of 1883, by enabling agricultural labourers who received a portion of their wages yearly, to have, in the event of the bankruptcy of the master, a prior claim upon the estate to the extent of one-third of the sum due to them.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Earl of Harrowby.*)

LORD HOUGHTON (on behalf of the Government) said, he would accept the Bill.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House.

IRELAND—SPECIAL PROTECTIVE AND REPRESSIVE CRIMINAL LEGISLATION.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE moved—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for a Return, from 1830 to the present time, of all special protective and repressive criminal legislation applicable to Ireland (by whatever name called), with the dates and names of proposers: Also a Return (so far as may be practicable) of all crimes, specifying conspiracy, sedition, murder, offences against the person, agrarian offences, arson, intimidation, &c., committed 12 months next before, and next after, the passing of the Act."

LORD FITZGERALD said, he objected to the issue of the proposed Return, on the ground that it would be practically worthless in substance, wholly objectionable, and that it would involve the country in great expense, and give an infinity of trouble to the officials in the Irish Department.

LORD ASHBOURNE said, he had never heard a more extraordinary objection raised than that of his noble and learned Friend. On the eve of legislative proposals of the utmost importance for Ireland, which must colour its whole future, it might be important that all such information bearing on the question should be furnished. The Prime Minister, in introducing his Home Rule Bill, had made it a part of the substantial ground upon which he justified that measure that so many Coercion Acts, as he called them, or as his (Lord Ashbourne's) noble Friend (Lord Oranmore and Browne) and many people preferred to call repressive or protective measures, had been passed since the date mentioned in the Motion without avail. It might be interesting, therefore, that they should have, in an authoritative way, a list of these Acts, with their titles and the years when they were passed. He ridiculed the notion that the information should be withheld because it would cost some little trouble and expense to obtain it. Such considerations, in view of the importance of the issues which would shortly come before them, were out of place. The materials for the substance of the Return which his noble Friend asked for were already in the Irish Office, as the Lord President had stated that Mr. Forster had presented a Return going over a great many years, and a smart and intelligent clerk could, if the matter was thought desirable, soon put the details together, from the information which had already been collected, at very little trouble and expense. He was sure his noble Friend would agree to modify the terms of his Motion in any reasonable manner, so as to suit the convenience of the Government. Perhaps his noble Friend would not object to the Motion standing over till after Easter, in order to its being more fully considered, and possibly being put into a more practical and definite shape.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY) said, that he wished to clear the Government from any possible imputation that they might wish to withhold the information. He was clearly of opinion that Parliament was entitled to any information it might desire on such a subject. He objected, however, to the Motion as it stood as being unintelligible, and to the requirement of this particular information. It was not possible to draw up a Return such as was described in the Motion of the noble Lord, and he must say it was not the duty of the Government to draw up a practicable form of Motion for him. But he would point out that, with regard to the chief part of it, the difficulty of obtaining this information was remarkably small, for any one of their Lordships who would go into the Library and ask the Librarian for files of the Statutes for the period named would at once obtain the dates of the Acts in question, with which all who were acquainted with the subject of Irish legislation were thoroughly familiar. He did not see that because his right hon. Friend at the head of the Government had referred to these facts, which were accessible to everybody, it was necessary to give them to the House. Indeed, he saw most of the information asked for by the noble Lord published in a newspaper only a few days ago. It was certainly one of the most extraordinary Motions he ever saw, to ask for a Return in that House of what the House itself had done. What struck him was, that the Return which was moved for by Mr. Forster was a very valuable Report. It gave, up to the year 1880, the information which was required, and probably it would only be necessary to continue that Return to the present time. He quite accepted the suggestion of the noble and learned Lord (Lord Ashbourne), as he thought it would be far better for the noble Lord (Lord Oranmore and Browne) to confer with the Lord President of the Council, in order to see what information would be really wanted by the House.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE said, that, after the discussion, he would postpone the subject until after Easter.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 15*th April,* 1886.

MINUTES.] — ROYAL COMMISSION — *Second Report*—Depression of Trade and Industry.

WAYS AND MEANS—*considered in Committee*—The FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Cottagers' Allotment Gardens * [186]; Terms of Removal (Scotland)* [187]; Returning Officers' Charges (Scotland) * [188]; Assistant County Surveyors (Ireland) * [189].

Second Reading—Metropolitan Police Stations [169].

Second Reading—Committed to a Select Committee —Post Office Sites [148]

Select Committee—Tithe Rent-Charge (Extraordinary) Amendment * [61], *nominated.*

Committee—Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) [118] [*Fifth Night*] — R.P.; International and Colonial Copyright [156] — R.P; Infants [139] —R.P.

Committee—Report—Third Reading—Companies Acts Amendment [158], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—LETTER CARRIERS — CASE OF SAMUEL LYONS.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether his attention has been called to the case of Samuel Lyons, postal messenger, residing at 24, Lennox Place, Rathmines, county Dublin; whether he is aware that, on the night of the 7th of February last, Lyons received a registered letter addressed to Mrs. Elburn, 7, St. Kevin's Parade, Rathmines; that he called at her address with the letter that evening, and knocked twice, but could not obtain admittance; that he then went on his round, and, when he had finished, took the letter home in his bag; whether he is aware that, next morning, Lyons took the letter by the first delivery, delivered it, and obtained a receipt for it; that, on the evening of February 9th, Mrs. Elburn came to Lyons and asked him if he remembered delivering a registered letter to her the morning before, which he acknowledged; that Mrs. Elburn then stated that the letter was open, which Lyons denied, and told her that as she had given him a receipt the matter should be referred to the Secretary of the General Post Office, O'Connell Street; whether, after about three weeks, Lyons was called upon for an explanation by the Post Office authorities; that he wrote his explanation at six o'clock on a Thursday evening; that it could not possibly reach the authorities before twelve o'clock next day, but that at five p.m. on Friday he was informed that he was suspended by the overseer on duty; that he was forced to take off his top-coat, although it was a very cold evening, and, having to walk home more than a mile without a coat, caught a very severe cold; whether, when he had been three weeks out of work, Lyons wrote to the authorities asking what steps they intended to take with him, as his means did not permit of his supporting his wife and himself any longer, and, as he had not received a decided answer from the Post Office, he would not seek for any other employment; whether he did not receive any acknowledgment from the authorities for seven days, at the end of which time he was informed by the Rathmines inspector that his case was still under consideration; that, since that time, Lyons has heard nothing further on the subject; and that, having now exhausted his means, his wife and he will have to go to the workhouse; and, whether the Postmaster General will state what steps will be taken in the matter?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): Without going into the details referred to by the hon. Baronet, I may say that the Post Office Authorities are of opinion that the registered letter in question had been tampered with by Lyons, and his services will be discontinued in consequence. In accordance with the usual practice, his wages will be paid up to the day the decision is communicated to him. Lyons had not a permanent position in the Post Office; and it was part of the understanding on which his services were temporarily engaged that he had other means of earning a living. With regard to the overcoat, I am assured that he would have been allowed to retain it until next day if he had expressed a wish to do so.

EDUCATION (IRELAND)—ST. GEORGE'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, LIMERICK.

MR. H. J. GILL (Limerick) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been called to the fact that St. George's Industrial School, Limerick, has been duly certified as capable of accommodating one hundred and seventy children, but that a grant for only eighty has been given; and, whether he will bring the matter under the consideration of the Treasury, with a view of obtaining a grant for the full number?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to this case in a correspondence I have had with the hon. Member, to whom I wrote on the subject yesterday. The purport of the letter was that the utmost I could promise was that the case will be considered, with many others of a similar character, when next year's Estimates are being framed.

LAW AND JUSTICE—CASE OF ABIGAIL BIRD.

MR. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the case of Abigail Bird, who, on Saturday 10th April, was sentenced by the Dartford Petty Sessional Bench to a month's hard labour, on a charge of stealing hurdlewood from a plantation, into which the evidence was that she had not gone; and, if so, whether he is satisfied that justice was done to the woman?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): Yes, Sir; my attention was called to this case, and I called for a Report from the Justices. I think that the evidence shows that this gipsy was undoubtedly acting in concert with a man who escaped, and that they were guilty of stealing the wood. I am not prepared to advise any interference with the sentence, although possibly a lighter one might have been sufficient. But it was unanimously adopted by a strong Bench.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS AT ROCKCHAPEL, CO. CORK.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is not a fact that there are only four mail deliveries in the week to Rockchapel, county Cork; and, whether, taking into account the considerable size of the place, and the great inconvenience caused to the inhabitants of the district by the delay in the delivery of letters and newspapers, the Post Office authorities will arrange for a daily delivery?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.), in reply, said, there was, as stated, only four deliveries in the week at Rockchapel. As to affording further accommodation, the revenue derived from the correspondence did not enable him to hold out any hope of a more efficient service.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—ATTENDANCES—THE ENGLISH AND SCOTCH CODES.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, If, by Clause 12 of the English Education Code, a half-time scholar, by an attendance of two hours, is credited an attendance and a-half, and for two such attendances with three, and if, by Clause 27 of the Scotch Code, half-time scholars only obtain credit for two under the same circumstances, with the consequence that the grant given to English schools is one-third more than in the case of Scotch schools; and, if he intends to propose to the Government to remove this anomaly and put all upon the same footing?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir LYON PLAYFAIR) (Leeds, S.): I understand from the Scotch Department that the alteration introduced into Article 12 of the English Code was not specially considered when the Scotch Code was under revision. The system on which grants are based in each Code is so far different that the effect of the change would not be quite the same in Scotland and England. But I understand that the Scotch Department are prepared to consider the educational and financial effects of such a change before the next Code is issued.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—NOTTINGHAM.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether it is true that, at a recent election of Guardians at Nottingham, Mr. G. M. Howard, the returning officer, disallowed many votes, on the ground that the signatures were in the same hand; that he impounded 300 voting papers received by him from the police; and that the former agent of a political party was found in a back room of the hotel, with other men, filling up papers for a certain candidate; and, whether, in view of the complaints of similar transactions at other local elections, the Government will introduce a measure to extend the operation of the Ballot Act to all local elections of whatever kind?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. STANSFELD) (Halifax): I understand that it is true that at the recent election of Guardians for the Nottingham Union the Returning Officer disallowed a considerable number of votes, on the ground that the signatures were in the same handwriting, and also that he received from the police 274 voting papers, which had been issued for delivery at the houses of the voters, and of which possession had been improperly obtained by certain persons. It is alleged that at the time of the voting papers being seized, one of the persons present was engaged entering on the papers the initials of voters, for which there was no legal authority, and that a considerable number had already been initialed. It is satisfactory to learn that the Guardians have directed that a prosecution shall be instituted. I believe that the grave irregularities which appear to have occurred at the election referred to are altogether exceptional; and it is to be borne in mind that the provisions of the Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act of 1884 are applicable to elections of Guardians. With regard to the suggestion that the operation of the Ballot Act should be extended to all local elections, I can only state that this question must necessarily be considered in connection with the scheme of local government. I am personally in favour of the extension of the provisions of that Act to local elections.

CIVIL SERVICE—EMPLOYMENT OF DISCHARGED SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AND MARINES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, How far the recommendations of the Select Committee, appointed in 1877, to inquire into the practicability of employing former Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil Departments of the Public Service have been adopted; and, particularly, if the recommendations contained in paragraphs 11 and 16 of the Report of the Committee, viz., that permanent messengerships in Government offices and park-keepers should be exclusively appointed from persons who have meritoriously served their Country, are strictly adhered to?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY) (Nottingham, E.), in reply, said, the recommendations of the Select Committee had not been lost sight of. All the War Office and Admiralty messengers were old soldiers or sailors, and appointments as park-keepers were only given to Army pensioners.

LAW AND JUSTICE—THE GLASGOW EXPLOSION—PATRICK DUNN.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) begged to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department a Question of which he had given private Notice—namely, Whether Patrick Dunn, who was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for blowing up a gasometer by dynamite at Glasgow in 1883, had been released; and, if so, upon what grounds; and whether the right hon. Gentleman would take care that in the absence of very extraordinary circumstances the full measure of deterrent punishment awarded by law to such enemies of humanity and the civilized world should be carried out?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I quite agree with the hon. Member that—to use his words—

> "in the absence of very extraordinary circumstances the full measure of deterrent punishment awarded by law"

ought to be carried out in these cases. But the circumstances of this case were very special. Two years ago the man was on the point of death, and was only not discharged because he was not fit for removal. He has ever since been in hospital, and is a permanent invalid requiring most careful nursing. He is so feeble in mind and body as never again to be likely to commit a crime. In fact, he is prematurely old and childish. I think that this case is just one of the exceptional ones which the hon. Members's Question recognizes; and he may have some chance of living under the care of his family. I may add that he only took an unimportant part in the conspiracy referred to.

INLAND REVENUE—BILL STAMPS.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Revenue Department has ceased to keep separate accounts of stamps sold under the heads "Inland Bill," "Foreign Adhesive Bill," and "Foreign Bill," stamps; and, whether, with a view to securing a full statement of the balance between Exports and Imports, by thus recording the amount of credit business transacted (both home and foreign), arrangements can be made that in future a special account be kept of the values sold annually of these three classes of stamps?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): There are two kinds of bill stamps—impressed, used for Inland bills, and adhesive, used for foreign bills. From the first of April, 1884, an account has been kept, but not printed, of the produce of each kind, which gives the following results:—Inland bill stamps, £342,132; foreign bill stamps, £362,981; or a total of £705,113. An account has also been kept of the number of stamps impressed at each rate; but no such account has been kept as regards adhesive stamps, as it is considered that such an account would have no value as showing the number of bills drawn, because in most cases the duty might, and probably would, be indicated by more than one stamp—for instance, £1 duty by two 10*s.* stamps, or a 10*s.* duty by four 2*s.* 6*d.* stamps.

IRELAND—DISPOSAL OF THE SUAKIM-BERBER RAILWAY MATERIAL.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kerry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he has received a Copy of a Resolution adopted at a public meeting of the inhabitants of Kenmare, held on the 22nd March, approving of the suggestion that the materials for the projected Suakim and Berber Railway, now lying unused at Woolwich, should be applied to the construction of a Railway from Headford to Kenmare, an Act for which passed in 1884; and, whether the Irish Government are disposed to favourably consider a proposal for that purpose?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Yes, Sir; I have received a copy of the Resolution referred to. The materials in question are in no way at the disposal of the Irish Government. I believe the Lord Lieutenant has communicated the wish expressed by the meeting to the Secretary of State for War, in whose hands the matter lies.

THE WATCH TRADE—HALL-MARKING OF WATCH CASES.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, seeing that in the Revenue Act, 1884, certain Foreign-made silver plate was exempted from the obligation of compulsory hall-marking, Her Majesty's Government will consider the expediency, in the Revenue Act of 1886, of releasing the British watch-case trade from the like obligation, and permitting watch cases of gold or silver with metal domes to be hall-marked, as recommended by the Select Committee on Hall-marking (1878-9), and by Mr. Prideaux, Clerk of the Goldsmiths' Company, in his evidence and suggestions before that Committee?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside) (who replied) said: The hall-marking of watch cases is not a question which concerns the Revenue, as both gold and silver cases, although required to be assayed, are specially exempted from stamp duty. As regards compulsory hall-marking I can only refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on April 9. I have to-day received a second letter from the Clerk to the Goldsmiths' Company, denying the correctness of the interpretation placed by the hon. Member upon the evidence given before the Select Committee by Mr. Prideaux.

POST OFFICE (TELEGRAMS)—INSUFFICIENTLY ADDRESSED TELEGRAMS.

MR. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is a fact, as stated by the Postmaster General's Secretary, in a reply to a Memorial from Bristol, that—

> "In consequence of the enormous increase which has taken place in the number of telegrams which have been insufficiently addressed, it has been found necessary to discontinue the practice formerly adopted of referring to directories in order to supplement these insufficient addresses,"

and that—

> "Their delivery is now as a rule effected only in the event of their falling into the hands of telegraphists or messengers who know the precise address of the persons for whom they are intended;"

and, if so, whether, in view of the great public inconvenience caused by this state of things, Her Majesty's Government are prepared to recommend any modification of the recent Act of Parliament which provides that addresses must be paid for?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Postmaster General informs me that the facts are as stated by the hon. Member; but there was also in the letter to the Memorialists a paragraph to the effect of the reply recently given in this House to the hon. Member for the Ormskirk Division of Lancashire (Mr. Forwood), that where a sender had evidently done his best to give a full address the Department would do what it could to secure the delivery of the telegram. As to any modification of the Act of Parliament, no modification would be acceptable which did not reduce the charge at present paid for telegrams; and as the average sum now paid for a telegram is only 8*d*., as compared with a payment of 1*s*. 1*d*. under the old tariff, Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to recommend any change in the direction suggested by the hon. Member. The remedy for the inconvenience complained of by the hon. Member is entirely in the hands of the senders of telegrams, who by paying for one or two extra words could make the addresses sufficient.

ARMY — COMPULSORY RETIREMENT OF MAJORS.

Lord ALGERNON PERCY (St. George's, Hanover Square) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he will relax the present regulations regarding the compulsory retirement at the age of forty-eight of Majors in the Army who joined the Service from the Militia after the age of twenty, and will raise the age of their retirement to fifty, as is the case with purchase Captains?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): I am afraid I cannot hold out any hope of this particular suggestion being adopted; because in a system of compulsory retirement the Rules applied to one rank may have so serious an effect on other ranks that the greatest caution is necessary in making changes, and I should hesitate to deal with the subject in a fragmentary manner.

THE ARMS ACT (IRELAND).

Mr. LEWIS (Londonderry) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, having regard to the intended adjournment of the House on the 19th April for one fortnight, and to the fact that the Irish Arms Act expires on the 1st June next, the Government intends, before the Easter Recess, to bring in a Bill to renew such Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The hon. Member has given me private Notice of his intention to supplement this Question by asking what districts in Ireland are now proclaimed under the provisions of this Act? The answer to this inquiry is that proclamations against either the having or the carrying of arms are in force in every county and county of a city in Ireland, with the exception of the county of Antrim outside the borough of Belfast, the greater portion of the county of Armagh, about half the county of Donegal, the county of Down, except the barony of Newry; all the county of Londonderry outside the city, all the county of Louth outside Drogheda, half the county of Tyrone, and the whole county of Wicklow. As regards the main inquiry of the hon. Member, it is not the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill for the renewal of this Act before the Recess; nor would anything be gained by doing so. It is necessary that I should have an opportunity of discussing with the authorities on the spot whether any modifications are required in the Act in case of its renewal. That opportunity I hope to have in the course of the so-called holidays.

SPAIN—COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the existing Treaty of Commerce between France and Spain expires in 1892; whether the Spanish Government is willing, on certain conditions, to make effective, until the year 1892, the "modus vivendi" signed by Sir Robert Morier before he left Madrid; whether that "modus vivendi" would secure "most favoured nation" treatment for all English goods imported into Spain; and, whether, in maturing any alteration in the present tariff of Import Duties on wines, Her Majesty's Government will endeavour to secure that this "modus vivendi" shall be made effective until the year 1892?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): Yes, Sir. The existing Treaty of Commerce between France and Spain will expire in 1892. I regret that I am not able at the present moment to add anything to the opinion which I have already expressed, to the effect that any commercial arrangement to be made with Spain ought not to be of a merely transient nature.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER — SANITARY CONDITION—SEWER GAS.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the honourable Member for North West Staffordshire, Whether the Government will take immediate steps to carry out temporary but effective measures, in accordance with the urgent recommendation of the Select Committee upon that subject, to prevent the continued contamination of the air of the Palace of Westminster by sewer gas?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. LEVESON GOWER) (Stafford, N.W.): The First Commissioner will consult with his technical advisers with a view to carrying out the recommendations of the Committee on the sanitation of the Palace of Westminster as soon as possible. The recommendations have not yet been made.

PUBLIC OFFICES—THE NEW ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE.

MR. T. BLAKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) asked the honourable Member for North West Staffordshire, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, with reference to the answer given by him on Tuesday last, relative to the description of stone to be used in the erection of the new Admiralty and War Office, Whether he is aware that there is in the Forest of Dean a large quantity of excellent stone which is the property of the Crown, and that specimens of this stone have been sent to the Office of Works; and, if so, whether these specimens have been submitted to the Committee referred to by him?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. LEVESON GOWER) (Stafford, N.W.): Specimens of the Forest of Dean stone were submitted to the Committee, and unanimously rejected by them, solely on the ground of unsuitability of colour.

RAILWAYS (SCOTLAND)—THE GIRVAN AND PORTPATRICK RAILWAY.

MR. H. F. H. ELLIOT (Ayrshire, N.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he is aware that the Girvan and Portpatrick Railway is of great importance to farmers in South Ayrshire, for the purpose of carrying their farm produce to market and for keeping them supplied with articles of agricultural value, such as lime, drain pipes, &c.; whether he is aware that the Girvan and Portpatrick Railway has suddenly suspended traffic, in consequence of its inability to come to terms with a rival Railway Company; whether he is aware that, though portions of the line are deemed by competent authorities to be insecure, the Girvan and Portpatrick Railway Company refuse to submit it to the examination of a surveyor of the Board of Trade; and, whether any steps can be taken by the Board of Trade to protect the public from the loss inflicted on it by a sudden and unlooked for suspension of railway traffic, as well as to determine whether the line is or is not safe for public use?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Board of Trade have no information on the various matters stated in the hon. Member's Question; but we have addressed a communication to the Railway Company, asking for explanations on all the points to which it refers. With regard to the statement that the line is insecure, we shall, in case we can obtain any information to warrant it, order an official inspection to be made at once.

NAVY—ARMED CRUISERS AND TRANSPORTS.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, When the Return as to the expenditure over Armed Cruisers and Transports, ordered by the House, will be ready?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): In reply to my hon. Friend, I have to state that the Return asked for by him is of a somewhat extensive character, and I fear that the earliest date that can be named for its completion is shortly after the Recess.

REVENUES AND ENDOWMENTS OF RELIGIOUS BODIES.

Mr. MORGAN HOWARD (Camberwell, Dulwich) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in the event of an inquiry being instituted by a Select Committee of this House, or otherwise, into the revenues and endowments of the Church of England, he will be prepared to recommend such an extension of the inquiry as shall include within its scope the revenues and endowments of other religious bodies holding property in the United Kingdom?

Mr. PICTON (Leicester) wished to ask, Whether, if the right hon. Gentleman felt himself able to answer the Question, he would also answer the preliminary Question, whether he was prepared to recommend a Select Committee at all to inquire into the revenues and endowments of the Church of England?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): In answer to my hon. Friend (Mr. Picton), I have to say that when some time ago he gave Notice of his Motion I consulted with the Home Secretary, and the conclusion we came to was that the object of his Motion was perfectly legitimate and proper; but the question was whether it would be necessary to set at work unaccustomed machinery for the purpose, and we thought that the information might be otherwise obtained in a manner much less cumbrous, but effectual. With regard to the Question asked by the hon. Gentleman on the other side, I feel so far with him that it would be extremely interesting if we could obtain full information or any amount of trustworthy or relevant information on the additional points of which he speaks. I recollect particularly hearing with very great interest a speech of a Gentleman who then sat, I think, for a division of Surrey, in which he described the sort of natural movement toward endowments in a multitude of cases connected with the Nonconformists of this country. I shall always feel under obligation to him for producing that information. But I own I do not see how it is to be added to by public agency. These Bodies—take the Roman Catholic Church, for instance—are in the nature of private Societies; and I do not see my way to set Departments of the State at work for the purpose of laying upon them the burden of supplying this information.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) asked, At what hour of the night the Government would not take up this Bill, which stood second on the Orders?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I hope that, considering the time the Bill has already occupied, and the difficulties we may have in going forward with it a short time hence, I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate will be allowed to go on with it any time before midnight.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Prime Minister, whether he would consider the propriety of having a Saturday Sitting to dispose of the Bill? [*Cries of* "Oh!" *and* "No!"]

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I think my hon. Friend has already received the reply of the House to his Question.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) hoped the right hon. Gentleman would reconsider what he understood to be intended—namely, the taking of the Committee on Indian Affairs on Monday. Would not that be rather sudden?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE said, he could not see that it would be a very sudden proceeding, as it had been mentioned,

HOUSE OF COMMONS—REFRESHMENT CHARGES AND ARRANGEMENTS.

Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford) said, that when the debate had concluded on Tuesday night, or, rather, early on Wednesday morning, a Motion was made for a Select Committee to inquire into the question of the Refreshment Department. He thought it was absolutely without precedent that two Select Committees should be sitting at the same time on the same subject. He was perfectly willing that the inquiry should be held; indeed, he was anxious that it should. In a discussion they had yesterday in the Committee they were unanimously of opinion that the inquiry would be useful, and that it should be held. He would suggest whether it would not be well to discharge the Order for this Committee, and add certain names to the Committee now sitting, and so carry on the inquiry?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian) said, that the right hon. Gentleman in introducing the subject, which was quite new to him, had made out a *primâ facie* case, and he agreed with him that there was an apparent anomaly. He had had no opportunity of consulting the authorities; and the proceedings having been taken almost at the very last moment of the Sitting, he believed there was no Member of the Government present who could take notice of it. The right hon. Gentleman had done a service by calling attention to the matter, and he would advise him to communicate with the Authorities of the House on the subject; and, for his part, he would be glad to second any reasonable proposal for obtaining an escape from what appeared an unfortunate position.

SIR THOMAS ERSKINE MAY, K.C.B., CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Mr. SPEAKER acquainted the House that he had received a Letter from the Right honourable Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., the Clerk of this House, which Mr. Speaker read to the House, as followeth:—

15*th April* 1886.

Sir,

I have the honour to acquaint you that I find myself compelled, by failing health, to tender my resignation of the office of Clerk of the House of Commons, which I hold, by Patent, from Her Majesty.

I have been in the service of the House, for upwards of Fifty-four years, of which the last Thirty have been passed at the Table. It is with painful reluctance and regret that I have resolved to withdraw from this honourable service, and from the performance of duties in which I take peculiar interest; but I feel that my strength is no longer equal to the continued strain of a laborious Session.

In closing my long connection with the House of Commons, I trust I may be permitted to express my grateful sense of the consideration and kindness which have been uniformly extended to me, by yourself and your predecessors in the Chair, and by honourable Members of the House, in many Parliaments.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient humble Servant,
T. Erskine May.

The Right Hon.
The Speaker of
The House of Commons,
&c., &c., &c.

Mr. SPEAKER thereupon addressed the House as followeth:—

I hope I may be permitted by the House to say a few words in reference to the Letter which I have just read.

I hope I may be permitted to express the regret which I feel, that it has fallen to my lot to communicate to the House the resignation of the Right Honourable Gentleman. But I am sure that it would not be expected that a service of Fifty-four years in this House—Thirty of which have been passed in attendance at that Table, Fifteen years as Clerk Assistant, and another Fifteen years as Clerk of the House of Commons—I am sure, I say, that it would not be expected that such a service should terminate without a few words from the Chair, The reputation of Sir Thomas Erskine May extends beyond the limits of this House, I may truly say that it extends beyond the limits of this Country. The work which he published in the year 1844, on the privileges, the customs, and usages of Parliament, is not only a household word in this House, but it has been the model for many other Legislatures. It has been held in high value in the United States of America, and it has been the mould on which have been formed the practice and proceedings of all our Colonial Legislatures.

Everybody will have recognized the great constitutional learning, the store of precedents, the equitable application of those precedents, the sound and mature judgment which the Right Honourable Gentleman has brought to bear upon the practice of Parliament, and the service of the House. No one, however, can tell, except those who have been brought into direct connection with him, the readiness with which he placed those stores of learning, and that unexampled experience, at the service of everyone who consulted him. My predecessors in the Chair— successive Speakers—have on repeated occasions acknowledged the value of the services of the Right Honourable Gentleman, and I regret that it should fall to me to be the last Speaker who will profit by his experience and judgment. They have testified their admiration of the qualities which distinguished Sir Thomas Erskine May; and, following their example, I wish respectfully to say that no one of my predecessors had a more hearty appreciation than I entertain of the value of those services; no one has more profited by them; and no one can be more desirous of expressing, not a mere formal, but a heartfelt appreciation of his services, and a regret at losing the connection which has been so long established between the Right Honourable Gentleman and this House.

I do not presume to anticipate any Resolution that may be come to by the House on the subject of the Letter which I have read, but I feel sure that the House will agree with me, that I could hardly have passed over the occasion of reading that Letter without making these few remarks.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Without saying a word at present, I wish to give Notice, with respect to the right hon. Gentleman (Sir Thomas Erskine May), that I will to-morrow move a Vote of Thanks to the right hon. Gentleman upon his resignation of the office of Clerk of the House.

PEACE PRESERVATION (IRELAND) ACT, 1881.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. LEWIS (Londonderry), who had a Motion on the Paper to the following effect:—

> "That, having regard to the statements made in this House on behalf of Her Majesty's Government as to the possibility in certain events of a serious outbreak of disorder in Ireland, this House is of opinion that it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government to take immediate steps for the renewal of 'The Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, 1881,' which will expire on the first of June next,"

said, he had no intention of taking up the time of the House by moving it; but he would content himself by calling the attention of the House and the country to this question before the Easter holidays. As early as the 6th of February last he gave Notice in the House for a few days afterwards asking if the Government intended to take steps to renew the Act, and he was informed by the Chief Secretary that it was premature to ask the Question. In the month of March he again put the Question, and received a similar reply. The Chief Secretary had now told him that it was too late to obtain any renewal of the Act before the Easter holidays. It was important to notice, and draw the attention of the House and the country to this—that according to the Chief Secretary nearly the whole of Ireland, with the exception of Wicklow, outside Ulster, was at the present time under the Arms Act. They had recently from the Benches opposite had a warning of what was likely to take place in the event of a certain Bill not obtaining the sanction of the House. They were told that they had reason to fear American interference; to fear outrage likely to arise in Ireland, and other consequences. Under these circumstances, it appeared that Her Majesty's Government were prepared to allow the whole of Ireland to arm itself in prospect of these proceedings. If that was so, it was right that the House should understand that the Government had distinctly contemplated the non-renewal of this Act, and decided to take no steps for the purpose of getting an early renewal of it. It was necessary that the House and the country should know what was shortly the effect of that Act. It was not to enforce any coercion, except under the responsibility of the Lord Lieutenant. The Act was only called into operation not against the whole country, but against certain parts of the country by the Lord Lieutenant on his responsibility. The fact was that they found the present Lord Lieutenant had thought it necessary, on his responsibility, to place the whole of Ireland outside Ulster, except Wicklow, under that Act, and prevent the people from carrying arms. That being so, notwithstanding all the warning they had received from the Chief Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), as to what was likely to happen in certain events, they were told by the Government that from the 1st of June the whole of the restrictions were to be withdrawn, and a licence given to the whole of the Irish people to arm themselves to the teeth. All he could say was that if the Government accepted that responsibility, on their own heads let it be. He thought it should be understood that the Government had delayed taking any steps for the renewal of the Act, and had rendered that renewal impossible until the Act had expired. The delay had been wilful on the part of the Government, and the responsibility for any bloodshed that might take place in Ireland in consequence of the Act not being in operation must fall upon them.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It needs only a sentence or two to reply to the hon. Member. He quite misapprehended the statement I made. The hon. Member assumes that the Government will in no case renew the Arms Act.

MR. LEWIS: You said it would be impossible before the 1st of June.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I never for one moment said it would be impossible. In reply to the hon. Member, I said that modifications might be necessary, and that I could not undertake to propose these modifications until I had consulted with the authorities who are in a position to supply information on the subject. One other remark as to the merits of the Arms Act, and as to some observations which fell from hon. Gentlemen. I have understood during the short time I have been in Office that the Arms Act, whatever value it may have had, has little or no value in preventing crime and outrage. The use which it has—and the use which we shall look to if we determine to renew it—is in preventing large bodies of men in the North of Ireland and elsewhere coming to gatherings armed. For that purpose the Arms Act is believed to be useful; and if the result of my investigation is to favour the renewal, the Government will take the necessary steps in sufficient time.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I quite accept the interpretation put by the right hon. Gentleman upon the answer he gave to my hon. Friend. I understood that what the right hon. Gentleman said was that it was impossible, with any satisfactory result, to bring in a Bill before the Easter Recess; and certainly I understood the purport of his answer to be that Her Majesty's Government contemplated the renewal of the Act with any modifications considered to be required. I want to make this remark—that the Government have delayed the consideration of this matter for a long time, quite long enough to justify much distrust on the part of hon. Members who, like my hon. Friend, are specially concerned in this matter as representing Irish constituencies. I will further remind the right hon. Gentleman that if he will refer to the speeches of his Colleague, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he proposed the enactment of this measure in the last Parliament, he will find that there were other much graver reasons for this legislation than that to which he has alluded.

An hon. MEMBER: Mr. Forster required it.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I think the people of Ulster have reason to complain of the statement made as to the renewal of the Arms Act by the Chief Secretary. We are told that if this Act is to be renewed it is only to be renewed in contemplation of an attempt on the part of the people of Ulster to protect themselves against dangers which threaten the Protestants of Ulster; and, in view of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman and the possible new application of the Arms Act, I will, on the introduction of any such Bill, move its rejection.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

WAYS AND MEANS—FINANCIAL STATEMENT.—COMMITTEE.

WAYS AND MEANS—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): Mr. Courtney, I am sure I shall not appeal in vain to the indulgence of the House while I endeavour, to the best of my ability, to discharge an unaccustomed duty in times that are certainly not too propitious. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) the other night told me he did not envy me the Office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Well, without any extraordinary magnanimity that is a sentiment many people might share at this particular time; and I can assure him I participate in it myself. I will endeavour, as simply and briefly as I can, to lay before the House the present condition of the finances of the country. First of all, with reference to the year that is just concluded, 1885-6, the Budget Estimates for the receipts of that year were £90,790,000, and the actual receipts have been £89,581,301. I am speaking here of the Exchequer receipts, which differ, to a certain extent, from the actual receipts of the year, as hon. Members are aware. Therefore, the receipts have fallen short of the Estimate by the sum of £1,208,699. The Customs were £173,000 less than the Estimate; Excise, £890,000 less; Stamps, £140,000 more; Land Tax, £10,000 less; House Duty, £30,000 less; Property and Income Tax, £240,000 less; making the produce of taxation £1,203,000 less than the Estimate. Upon the other Revenue, not levied on taxes, there is an increase over the Estimate of £150,000 from the Post Office; £20,000 from the Telegraphs; £16,080 from Interest on Advances; and a fall of £191,779 upon Miscellaneous Items, which is, altogether, a falling-off of £5,699 as compared with the Estimates. The net result of this is a deficiency of £1,208,699 on the Revenue as compared with the Estimate. I now come to the Expenditure of 1885-6. The estimated Expenditure for the year—I am speaking of the last Budget brought in by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer — was £93,617,171. The actual Expenditure was £92,223,844, being a diminution in the Expenditure, as compared with the Estimate, of £1,393,327. There is a diminution of £28,641 upon the permanent charge for the Debt; £73,681 upon the interest of loans; £121,613 in other charges upon the Consolidated Fund, making a diminution in Consolidated Fund Charges of £223,935. On the Army there was a diminution, as compared with the Estimate, of £723,616; an increase on the Navy of £274,009; upon the Vote of Credit there was a diminution of £401,000; upon the Miscellaneous Civil Services, a diminution of £91,061; on Customs and Inland Charges, a diminution of £49,226; upon Post Office Charges, a diminution of £60,915; upon the Telegraph Service, £94,816; and upon the Packet Service, £22,767; making a total diminution in the Expenditure on Supply Services, as compared with the Estimate, of £1,169,392. The result, then, is that the Expenditure of 1885-6 is less than the Estimate by £1,393,327. Comparing the Revenue with the Expenditure, we have an Expenditure of £92,223,844, and a total Revenue of £89,581,301, leaving a deficit of £2,642,543. The deficit, as estimated by the right hon. Gentleman, was £2,827,171. The actual deficit is, therefore, less than the estimated deficit by the sum of £184,628. The diminution on the Expenditure is, to that extent, greater than the decrease of the Revenue. The result of the deficit account stands thus—there was a deficit in the year 1884-5 of £1,049,773; there is now a deficit in the year 1885-6 of

£2,642,543, making a total deficit for the two years of £3,692,316. Of course, a considerable portion of the deficit of last year, which is smaller than it was estimated to be, is due to the fact that the House declined to adopt the additional taxation which the former Government proposed. However, that is the figure at which the deficit stands. It will be in the recollection of the House that authority was given to the right hon. Gentleman to raise £4,000,000 by Treasury Bills to meet this accumulated deficit. The state of the balances, however, has rendered it unnecessary that, at the present time, more than £3,250,000 of that £4,000,000 should be raised for that purpose, the rest being supplied from other sources. The balances, I am happy to say, have not been reduced in 1885-6; on the contrary, they have increased. On April 1, 1885, they were £4,993,207; and on April 1 this year they were £5,627,944. The balances, therefore, have been raised, in the course of the last financial year, by the sum of £632,737, and are, as near as possible, at the same figure as they stood at on April 1, 1884. According to the experience of recent years, I think I may say that the figure of £5,627,000 represents a fair average balance. These figures, I think, give a complete outline of the financial results of 1885-6, in respect of Revenue, Expenditure, Deficit, and Balances. I will now proceed to offer to the Committee some information, going a little more into detail, as to the particular variations upon the Receipts and Expenditure of the year as compared with the Estimates. First, as to Revenue. The actual receipts from Customs of the year 1884-5 were £20,321,000. The Customs were estimated for 1885-6 at £20,000,000, or £321,000 less than in the preceding year. That reduction of Estimates was made in consequence of the large anticipation of Customs revenue which took place at the close of the previous financial year owing to expected changes in taxation. The actual receipts of 1885-6 have been £19,706,000. This was £294,000 less than the Estimate. These figures do not all correspond exactly, as I have pointed out, with the Exchequer receipts; because, as is known, Exchequer receipts do not, owing to variations in collection, tally precisely with what are called the actual receipts of the year. The House would like to know the cause of this diminution in the Customs receipts. First of all, there is a diminution of £46,000 on dried fruits; that does not result from a diminution of consuming power, but the currant crop failed, and the amount of duty paid on currants is governed by the crop. Upon foreign spirits there is a total loss of £58,000. The loss on foreign brandy is £129,000, due in a great degree to the failure of the French brandy; and there is a gain on the other spirits, mainly German, of £70,000, making a total loss on foreign spirits of £58,000. Wine is less by £77,000. That is a constantly falling revenue. Tea is £200,000 less than the Estimate. That, again, is due to the great anticipation which took place in the Tea Duty at the end of the financial year 1885, and not to any diminution in consumption. This was not sufficiently allowed for in the Estimate. The actual yield is, however, considerably above the yield of 1883-4, which was £4,270,000, the average of the last two years being £4,500,000, which is the fairest test of the present rate of consumption. Tobacco yielded £84,000 more than the Estimate. As to the Inland Revenue, the Excise receipts in 1884-5 were £26,600,000. The Estimate for the year just concluded is £26,350,000, the actual receipts are only £25,460,000—that is to say, less than the Estimate by a sum of £890,000, and less than the receipts of the preceding year by £1,140,000. This is a very important matter as affecting the Revenue, although it has other bearings as regards the social condition of the people. The decline is mainly upon alcoholic drink. I will give the receipts upon alcoholic revenue, taking Customs and Excise together—that is, foreign as well as home-made spirits. Spirits are below the Estimate of 1885-6 by £799,000, and below the receipts of 1884-5 by £1,000,000. Wine is below the Estimate of 1885-6 by £77,000, and below the receipts of 1884-5 by £40,000. Beer is below the Estimate of 1885-6 by £95,000, and below the receipts of 1884-5 by £140,000. The total alcoholic revenue of last year is, therefore, £971,000 below the Estimate, and below the receipts of the preceding year by £1,179,000. The Railway Duty is £51,450 below the Estimate. That is due to the extension of the urban limits of exemption under the authority of the Board of Trade, and also to the larger application of the 1*d.* rates on the various railways of the country. This source of Revenue has fallen since 1882-3 from £810,000 to £338,000, there being, therefore, a loss on the Railway Duty of nearly £500,000. Passing from Excise to Stamps we find an increase upon the Death Duties. The Probate receipts for 1884-5 were £3,965,000. They were estimated to yield last year £3,950,000. They have actually yielded £4,070,000, the highest sum which the Probate Duty has ever yielded in this country. That I cannot but regard as a satisfactory circumstance, because it is due to the average amount of wills, and not to the falling-in of any great millionaire property. It affords a good test of the accumulated wealth of the country, and a sign that it has not suffered, at all events at present. The Legacy and Succession Duty was estimated for 1885-6 at £3,100,000; the actual receipts have been £3,330,000, the excess on the Estimate being £230,000. This is less than in 1884-5 by £400,000, the excess in that year being mainly due to the abnormal collection of old arrears and reversions made in that year. The Corporation Duty has entirely failed to come up to the Estimate made of it. It was estimated to yield £150,000; it has only actually yielded £32,500, being a deficit of £117,500. The General Stamps have yielded £92,000 less than the Estimate, and almost the same as the receipts of the previous year. The Inhabited House Duty yielded £30,000 less than the Estimate, due, however, not to a fall in house property, but to a retardation of collection, owing to the new assessment, which prevented the collection being completed in the course of the last financial year. As to Income Tax, the receipt for 1885-6 was £15,160,000, being less than the Estimate by £240,000, which is also due, to a great extent, to retardation of collection. I believe that is the opinion of the authorities of the Inland Revenue, and their judgment is confirmed by the receipts which have already taken place in the present financial year. The Post Office and Telegraphs show an increase above the Estimate of £170,000. Miscellaneous Receipts show a decrease on the Estimate of £191,000. This is due to certain calculated arrears of Egyptian contribution towards Naval and Military Expenditure which it was thought would come under this head, but which it was afterwards found would have to go to the different Naval and Military Accounts as extra receipts; and, therefore, this sum really appears on the other side of the account as diminishing the Army and Navy Expenditure. I have thus given an account of the variations between the Estimate of the receipts under the head of the Revenue of last year; and I now pass on to the variations on the Expenditure. The Expenditure, on the whole, is £1,393,000 below the Estimate. The Debt Charges are £224,000 less than the Estimate. The greater part of this saving is due to the low rate of interest obtainable last year in the open market. The interest on Floating Debt was estimated at 3¼ per cent, the rate actually paid was 2½ per cent on Exchequer Bills; on Treasury Bills at three months 1⅝ per cent, and at six months 2¼ per cent. There has, therefore, been a considerable saving of interest, amounting to about £100,000. Other Consolidated Fund Charges are less than the Estimate by £121,000, of which a small part is due to pensions that have fallen in; but the principal part—£110,000—may be ascribed to the fact of the War Office not requiring last year that sum for the localization of Military Forces. There is a large apparent diminution in the Army Expenditure, amounting to £724,000. I am sorry to say this is not real economy in expenditure; but is due principally to moneys which stood over from the previous year. The saving effected was due first to an over-issue in 1884-5 of £560,000. The extra receipts exceeded the Estimate by £164,000, including the Egyptian arrears. These receipts which are appropriated in aid of the Vote were larger than they were expected to be; and therefore the demands upon the Exchequer are lessened by £164,000. This is the sum previously referred to as having been transferred to the account from the head of Miscellaneous Revenue. The Navy is in excess of the Estimate by £274,000. That was due to £38,000 excess on the Vote of the previous year, which had to be made good; and of a net Supplementary Vote of £308,000, of which there was £236,000 issued, making a total of £274,000. The Vote of Credit was £401,000 less than the Estimate. Besides these larger items, there were lesser savings on the Expenditure of £91,000 in the Civil Services; £49,000 in Customs and Inland Revenue; £60,000 in the Post Office; £94,000 in Telegraphs; and £22,000 in the Packet Service. This concludes the facts I have to lay before the Committee relating to the financial results of the year which has just closed. Before I go to the consideration of the Revenue and Expenditure of the year upon which we are now entering, I would ask the leave of the Committee to say a few words upon the progress of the Revenue and Expenditure within the last 10 or 11 years. I take the year 1875-6 as a starting point, because the figures have been given in a new and much more convenient form in a Return which has been prepared by my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), who has already rendered such great service to the finances of the country. The figures are given there of the net Revenue and net Expenditure of the country in a form which presents the true facts of the case in a more accurate shape than the ordinary Return. Figures are very often ignorantly employed, both in reference to Revenue and Expenditure, which give a very false impression. You see on the one side large sums of money for the Post Office, which swell the expenditure. You see, on the other hand, large sums of receipts which are not really Revenue. Such statements do not give an accurate view of what is the real Expenditure, and what is the real Revenue of the country. But in my hon. Friend's Return these things are carefully adjusted, and you find there the real, actual, and true account of the Revenue and Expenditure of the country. I will ask the Committee to allow me to place before them—I will do it as briefly as I can—the fluctuations in the Revenue of the country since the year 1875-6, and also the variations in the Expenditure. The facts are very remarkable; I have my hon. Friend's Table made up for this purpose to the present time. I will take the Customs, Excise, Stamps, Taxes, and the Post Office, excluding the Income Tax for obvious reasons. The variations in that tax are so large at different times that it would only confuse the calculations to include it. The figures I am about to give are founded on the Customs, Excise, Stamps, Taxes, and the Post Office, excluding, as I have said, the Income Tax. Now, it is a very curious fact that if you compare the net Revenue for 1885-6 with the net Revenue of the year 1875-6, excluding in both cases the Income Tax, the figures for each of these years are very nearly the same — that is to say, rather more than £62,500,000. But if the sources of that Revenue are analyzed, they will be found to vary much in their constituent parts. There is a considerable diminution in Customs, and a great deal in Excise; but that is recouped, of course, on the other heads. The striking figure in the comparison is the great fall in the alcoholic revenue in that period. I will give the Committee the figures; and though they may be prepared for the general result, I doubt whether they will not be surprised at the magnitude of the totals. In 1875-6 the Revenue derived from wine, beer, and spirits was as follows:—From wine, £1,753,000; from beer, £8,161,000; from foreign spirits, £6,141,000; and from home spirits, £15,154,000, making together a total receipt of £31,209,000. Now, the population at that time was 32,749,000. Therefore, the contribution from wine, spirits, and beer amounted to 19*s.* 1*d.* per head for that population. Turning to 1885-6 we have a population of 36,325,000; and had they been consuming as much wine, beer, and spirits as they did in 1875-6, the yield to the Revenue on account of these articles in the last financial year, at the rate of 19*s.* 1*d.* per head of the population, would have amounted to £34,660,000. The actual yield was, however, only £26,830,000. The receipts from wine in 1885-6 were £1,225,000; from beer, £8,405,000; from foreign spirits, £4,100,000; and from home spirits, £13,100,000. Therefore, the population now is contributing in proportion, as compared with the contribution in the year 1875-6, a sum upon alcoholic liquors of £7,830,000 less than it did at that period, or at the rate of 14*s.* 9*d.* per head. Leaving the ratio out of consideration, it is supplying in 1885-6 an alcoholic revenue actually less in amount than it did in 1875-6 by the sum of £4,379,000. You may say that, roughly speaking, the diminution in your Revenue from alcoholic sources is about £4,500,000 in the last 11 years The decline in the year just concluded is the largest that has ever been known—the decrease amounting to £1,179,000. There is no doubt that a great part of that decline, as I shall show presently, is due to a change in the habits of the people. There is, I hope, a great change in the voluntary temperance of the people. A considerable part of it is, however, due also, I am told by the Inland Revenue authorities, to involuntary temperance; it is believed that the people drink a good deal more water than they suppose in their beverages—more than they did in former times; and the apprehensions of the trade, it is said, have greatly conduced to the weakening of the liquors. We do not now drink ourselves out of a difficulty, as the Earl of Derby, I think, said we had done in the case of the Alabama claim. But although we have been more temperate in the last six years, from 1880 to 1886, than we were in the preceding eight years from 1873 to 1880, we have even now only got back to the figures per head of the seven years from 1866 to 1872, and the alcoholic consumption of the people is at this time higher per head of the population than it was in the years from 1860 to 1865. I do not wish the Committee to believe that this diminution of alcoholic revenue is due mainly to a failure of the consuming power of the people. It is very important to test the matter as far as we can, because persons are apt to jump to the conclusion and say—"Oh, that is in consequence of the people having less to spend." Well, but that is not the fact. As I have stated, we have lost £4,500,000 of the Revenue from alcohol, but yet the Revenue stands under other heads at the same figures as before. It has been recouped from other sources. The yield of the Revenue is higher considerably than it was from dried fruits, tea, and tobacco. I have shown that the receipts from alcohol are £4,500,000 less than they were before; but the articles I have just named now produce together £2,150,000 more than they did at that period. Of that increase, perhaps about £500,000 may be attributed to the increase in the Tobacco Duty. The rest must be ascribed to increased consumption. Now, these things — tea, tobacco, and dried fruit—can, of course, be accurately tested in connection with the duties; but anybody who takes the trouble to study the Import Tables of this country in the Statistical Abstracts will find that they are not only interesting and instructive in their commercial aspect, but that they give an insight into the history of the habits of the people which it is very useful to consider. You will there find that while there has been this very great diminution in the consumption of alcohol, there has been concurrently an enormous increase in the demand for what may be called other comforts of life. If you take, for instance, articles like bacon and ham, imported from abroad, you find that in 1870 there were 545,000 cwt. of bacon and ham imported into this country, while in 1884 the quantity imported had increased to 3,237,000 cwt. I take the year 1884 only because it is the last year given in the Return. In 1870 there were imported into this country 430,800,000 eggs, while in 1884 there were 993,600,000 eggs imported. Of oranges and lemons in 1870 there were imported 2,000,000 bushels, and in 1884, 4,500,000 bushels. Of raw fruit there were imported in 1870, 1,200,000 bushels, and in 1884, 5,000,000 bushels. Then there is another article which I think is of immense importance—I mean petroleum. The entries for home consumption of petroleum in 1870 were 7,000,000 gallons, and in 1884, 53,000,000 gallons. You will recollect the days when the labouring man had to go to bed almost by the sun, because he could not afford coal for a fire, and hardly a farthing rushlight for a candle; but now he gets that extraordinarily cheap and bright light to illumine his cottage, and the child who has been educated at the board school is able to read to his parent in the evening, an enormous addition to his comfort. Then take an article like spices. In 1870 the home consumption of spices was 16,000,000 lbs., and in 1884 it was 28,000,000 lbs. Again, sugar has increased from 14,500,000 cwt. in 1870 to 23,000,000 cwt. in 1884. The cheapness and abundance of sugar have been one of the enjoyments most valued by the people. On looking through these Tables I came across figures which struck me very much—I mean the enormous increase in the importation of furs. I saw the figures of furs of all sorts imported into the United Kingdom, which stood in 1876 at 7,500,000; in 1884 they were over 26,500,000. I thought I should like to have some inquiry made as to what was the meaning of that extraordinary importation of furs. A great many of them are brought here to be exported again; but the number of furs retained for home consumption increased from 3,930,800 in 1876 to 15,217,000 in 1884. I inquired what was the meaning of this, and I found that the number of rabbit skins imported from Victoria, Tasmania, and New Zealand has increased from 1,199,000 in 1876 to 14,766,000 in 1884. I hope I may be excused for bringing before the House these figures in respect especially to a quadruped with whose legislative history I have had some connection. Now, if I am not wearying the Committee I should like to go on with this comparison. I have pointed out that the loss of £4,500,000 sustained on alcohol in 10 years has been recouped to the extent of nearly one-half by the increase of the duties on tea, tobacco, fruit, &c., the rest being accounted for by an increase in the Death Duties, the House Duty, and the Post Office Revenue. All these things show an increase in the resources of the nation. I think that the House would like to hear a word upon the subject of the Revenue of the Post Office. The gross receipts of the Post Office for the year 1875-6 were £7,500,000; those for the year 1885-6 being £10,250,000. But although there was this large increase in the amount of the receipts of the Post Office, there has been a decrease in the last few years in the net income of the Department due to the enormous increase in the Expenditure. During the last two years the net Revenue of the Post Office has diminished by a very considerable sum. For the three years 1880-1883 the average net yield of the Post Office and Telegraphs was £2,900,000; while for the two years 1884-1885 it was £2,500,000, being a loss of some £400,000 a-year. This loss is, of course, due to the institution of the Parcel Post and the 6*d.* telegrams. The Parcel Post is largely mixed up with the Letter Service; but the loss arising from its establishment was estimated at £90,000 for the year 1884-5. The increase in the receipts for the year 1885-6 has, however, been £40,000; so that I am glad to say that the growth of the receipts is beginning to overtake that of the Expenditure, and we hope that the development of the business of this branch of the Department, due to the new rate and the extension of the Service to the Colonies and to foreign countries, will before long bring the Receipts and the Expenditure under this head to, at all events, an equality. In dealing with this point, I desire to say a word in memory of a man who was much esteemed by this House—I mean Mr. Fawcett. Mr. Fawcett estimated the number of parcels that would be conveyed by the Parcel Post at 27,000,000, while the actual number of parcels conveyed in the year 1885-6 was 26,527,000. Those figures show how accurate was Mr. Fawcett's foresight in this matter. I must further say that although there has been a loss under this head for some time the experiment has resulted in great convenience to the public, without, as I hope, any permanent loss to the Revenue. But the case of the Telegraphs is very different. Since 1872 the Telegraphs have never paid the whole of the interest on the capital expended. In 1880-1 the deficiency on the interest of the Stock amounted to about £1,000; while in 1883-4 the deficiency on the working expenses alone without any payment of interest whatever was £20,000, the deficiency being caused by an increase in the salaries of the working staff and a diminished receipt owing to the reduced scale adopted as the result of the Motion of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), made in 1882. The sum of £500,000 was spent in three years in preparations for the introduction of the 6*d.* telegrams; and the result of six months' experience shows that under the reduced tariff the cost of sending a message is greater than the price received for it. It is true that there has been a large increase in the number of messages sent; but, while the receipts in 1880-1 were £1,634,000, and the expenditure £1,309,000, showing a surplus for the year of £325,000, the receipts for 1885-6 were £1,775,000 against an expenditure of £1,922,000, leaving a deficit of £147,000 upon the working expenses alone, without providing anything for interest. The result has been a total loss of £500,000 by the change; and, whatever may be the convenience which that change has afforded the public, I hope the House will bear in mind the financial result of this experiment, and that when demands for alterations of this kind are made they will not be coupled with demands for public economy. Up to this point I have spoken only of taxes other than the Income Tax; and I think that I have shown that there has been no substantial falling-off in the sources of the Revenue of the country, except in the case of the alcoholic revenue, and that this defalcation does not indicate a diminished consuming power. Now, I should like to say a word upon the Income Tax. I am able to speak of the yield of this tax with great satisfaction; and I trust that Chancellors of the Exchequer may always be able to look upon that tax as a safe sheet anchor of Revenue. I am far from advocating that the Income Tax should be kept at its present height. What I mean to say is that I hope that as a source of Revenue the Income Tax may always prove staunch and solid, and that it will not fail to respond to the calls which it may be necessary to make upon it. The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, in his Budget Speech of 1881, made a statement of the produce of the Income Tax from its establishment up to that time. From that statement it appears that at the time of its first establishment by Sir Robert Peel, in 1842-3, the tax yielded for each 1*d.* levied £772,000, while in 1852 it yielded for each 1*d.* £810,000. In 1877-8, including the tax levied in Ireland, it yielded for each 1*d.* £1,990,000. In 1881-2, it yielded £1,916,000; in 1882-3, it yielded £1,963,000; in 1883-4, £2,016,000; in 1884-5, it yielded £2,004,000; in 1885-6, it yielded £1,980,000; and in 1886-7 it is estimated to yield £1,970,000 for each 1*d.* levied in the pound. This shrinkage of the tax in the last two years was not due solely to a diminution in the property and profits of the country; because a high rate of Income Tax causes people to look sharper after their assessment to that tax than they do when it stands at a low figure. For instance, the number of claims for remission in 1876, when the tax stood at 2*d.* and 3*d.* in the pound, was 66,000; but that number rose to 125,000 in 1882, when the tax stood at 5*d.*, and to 166,000 in 1885, when the tax stood at 5*d.* and 8*d.* in the pound. This year the claims for remission have been very much higher than they ever were before. The tax, however, still yields £50,000 per 1*d.* more than it did in 1881-2. Those figures do not, in my opinion, exhibit any serious diminution in the present resources of the country. The Returns of pauperism point satisfactorily in the same direction. In the fourth week of February, 1870, the number of paupers in England and Wales relieved were 49 per 1,000 of the population. In 1875—the time of great prosperity—they were 32 per 1,000. This year they were 28 per 1,000. There is also another circumstance which is very satisfactory—namely, that if the people are drinking less spirits they are saving more money. In 1875, which was a time of prosperity, the amount deposited in the Post Office and Trustee Savings Banks was £67,575,000, being at the rate of £2 1*s.* 3*d.* per head of the population; while in 1885, after all these years of depression in trade, the amount so deposited had increased to £94,156,000, in addition to the sum of £3,150,000 invested for depositors, making a total for the year of £97,306,000. Thus the saving power of the population had increased last year so as to reach £2 13*s.* 6*d.* per head. I have shown, therefore, that the Revenue has been, though not elastic, yet tolerably steady for the last 10 years; but things are very different when we come to look at the Expenditure. I will give the Committee shortly the gross figures of the Expenditure; and I will take, in the first place, the Expenditure in the interval of nine years between 1875-6 and 1884-5. In those nine years the Expenditure upon the Army and Navy grew to the extent of £1,500,000; Civil Government, £360,000; Education, £1,900,000; and Grants in Aid, £1,600,000; making a growth of Expenditure in the nine years of £5,360,000. Now, I will take the last two years. In that period the Army and Navy Expenditure has grown £4,800,000; the Civil Government, £200,000; Education, £351,000; Grants in Aid, £150,000; being an increased Expenditure of £5,501,000, of which £4,800,000 is Naval and Military. The total increase for the 11 years is £6,250,000 on the Army, £560,000 on the Civil Government, £2,273,000 on Education, and £1,781,000 on Grants in Aid; making a total growth of £10,864,000 upon these heads of Expenditure in the 11 years. I should like to point out that upon the Civil Services—that is, Civil Establishments, properly so-called — there has been no growth whatever in that period. There is a figure of £555,000 representing an apparent increase under this head; but it is due to Surveys, Irish Land Commission, Education — not Elementary — Museums, Learned Societies, and new Colonial Services in Bechuanaland, Cyprus, and Telegraph Subsidies. That is the whole growth on Civil Expenditure. In 1884-5 the Army cost £15,961,000; in 1886-7 it is estimated to cost £18,473,000, an increase of £2,512,000. The Navy in 1884-5 cost £10,708,000, and the Estimate for 1886-7 is £12,993,000, being an increase of £2,285,000, or a total increase on the Army and Navy of £4,800,000. Just let me sum up this growth of Expenditure in this period, and I should add to those figures £846,000 for Debt Charges, which is really, of course, only money saved for the payment of the Debt. I will give the figures for the last 11 years. The increase in those years on the Debt Charges is £846,000; on Grants in Aid, £1,781,000; Civil Administration, £566,000; Education, £2,273,000; Army, £4,071,000; and Navy, £2,195,000; making in all £11,732,000. During that period 6*d.* had been added to the Income Tax, which yielded £11,646,000, almost exactly the same amount as you have added to your Expenditure. If you distribute it in rough figures these are the results. Debt charges and grants in aid may be taken together as representing 1¼*d.* of the 6*d.* increase in the Income Tax. These can hardly be regarded as, in the ordinary sense of the word, Expenditure. They rather belong to the head of Savings and Transfer of Charge. Education you may take as representing 1¼*d.*; the Civil Administration is little more than ¼*d.*, and the Army and Navy will stand for 3¼*d.*, out of the increase of 6*d.* on the Income Tax. That, I think, illustrates with tolerable accuracy the growth of the Revenue and Expenditure of the country for the last 11 years. Now, I come to what will interest the Committee more nearly—that is, the finance of the present year. The total estimated Expenditure of the year 1886-7 is £90,428,599; the Exchequer issues for last year were £92,223,000; therefore, the estimated Expenditure for the year 1886-7 is £1,794,401 less than that of last year. But then, of course, there is no Vote of Credit to be provided. I will give the Committee the details of the figures. The Estimate for 1886-7 is as follows:—Permanent Charge of the Debt, £28,036,917; Interest on Local Loans, £641,000; Interest on Suez Bonds, £200,000; other charges on the Consolidated Fund, £1,762,000; making a total of Consolidated Fund Charges, £30,639,917. The Estimate for the Army is £18,233,200; for the Navy, £12,993,100; Miscellaneous Civil Services, £18,008,691; Customs and Inland Revenue, £2,753,563; Post Office, £5,218,955; Telegraph Services, £1,845,510; Packet Service, £735,663; the total of the Supply Services being £59,788,682—that is, on the whole, £1,795,245 less than last year. Though we are relieved this year from the burden of the Vote of Credit and the charges for the Afghan War to the extent of £9,700,000, our Expenditure will be only £1,800,000 less than last year. The difference, as the Committee will at once assume, is mainly due to the fact that we naturally revert to the arrangement for the payment of Debt by Terminable Annuities, which represents £5,500,000, and the addition to our regular Expenditure represents £2,500,000 more. Of this there is an addition to the Civil Estimates of £282,000—that includes the normal increase for Education, £190,000; an addition to the Post Office and Telegraph Expenditure, £525,000—a great part of that being for new sites and plant; and an addition of £1,500,000 for the Army and Navy. That is the estimated Expenditure for the year 1886-7. I now come to the estimated Revenue for the year just beginning. The gross figure is £89,885,000 — that is to say, £303,699 in excess of the receipts of 1885-6. We take the Customs for next year at £19,700,000, being £127,000 less than last year; the Excise we put at £25,710,000, or £250,000 more than last year; Stamps we place at £11,365,000, or £225,000 less than last year; Land Tax and House Duty, £2,920,000, or £30,000 more than last year; the Property and Income Tax, £15,755,000, or £595,000 more than last year; making the total estimated produce of the taxes for 1886-7 £75,450,000, or an increase over the receipts of last year of £523,000. The Post Office we take at £8,270,000, an addition of £120,000; Telegraphs, £1,730,000, a decrease of £10,000;

Crown Lands, £370,000, a decrease of £10,000; Interest on Advances, £1,165,000, a decrease of £211,080; Miscellaneous, £2,900,000, a reduction of £108,221; making a total Non-Tax Revenue of £14,435,000, or £219,301 less than last year. Adding these figures together we get a total estimated Revenue of £89,885,000, or £303,699 more than last year. For the Customs we take the same sum as the actual receipts last year. I mentioned before that we expect the loss upon dried fruits to be replaced. We take the decrease upon spirits as amounting to £335,000, and the increase upon wine as amounting to £27,000. We estimate an increase upon tea of £212,000, and upon tobacco of £55,000—so much for Customs. As to the Excise, we estimate an increase of £45,000 upon beer, and £245,000 upon spirits, making together £290,000 — thus nearly balancing the estimated loss on alcohol under the Customs. On Stamps we estimate a decrease in the Death Duties of £220,000, owing to the cessation of the whip up for arrears to which I previously referred. The House Duty we estimate will increase £30,000, and the Income Tax we estimate will increase £600,000, the arrears being at 8*d.* instead of 6*d.* The increase on the Post Office we estimate at £120,000, which is much less than the increase in the expenditure. In the interest on advances we estimate a decrease of £211,000, owing to there being no arrears of interest on the Suez Canal Shares this year. Under the head of Miscellaneous Sources of Revenue we estimate that there will be a decrease of £108,000. The estimated Revenue is thus £89,885,000; and if you compare that sum with the estimated Expenditure you arrive at a deficit of £543,599, not a very satisfactory result in a time of peace, and when the Income Tax is 8*d.* in the pound. The increase of Expenditure is principally to be accounted for by the large expenditure upon the Naval and Military Services, an expenditure which the Committee, I fear, must now look upon as normal, as there is nothing special in the circumstances of the Naval and Military Expenditure of the present year. The interesting question is—"How is this deficit to be met?" In ordinary times, no doubt, it would be met by an increase of taxation; but I know no class and no trade at the present time which is in a condition to bear additional taxation. As to indirect taxation, I do not look to that with any sanguine hope, especially after the events of last June, when a blow was struck at indirect taxation from which I do not think it will soon recover. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) said in his Budget Speech—

> "In such times as these it is, I fear, too true that, for the purposes of Revenue, we have arrived at the limits of increased taxation on the most important taxed articles of consumption, except, perhaps, one article only—namely, tea."—(3 *Hansard*, [299] 131.)

Explaining what he had said on the subject of tea, the right hon. Gentleman subsequently used these words—

> "Hon. Members will find in my speech on the Budget that after presenting what seemed to me to be the financial and economical reasons in favour of an increase of duty on tea I intentionally, and, as I think, completely, demolished my own arguments by a practical conclusion conveyed in a single sentence—namely, by stating my belief that such an additional duty would be so unpopular that Her Majesty's late Government could not propose it."—(*Ibid.*)

Then he spoke of the high rate of the Income Tax, saying—

> "I do not think the total burden on the Income Tax payer this year, with the Income Tax at 8*d.*, relatively to the total amounts received by the Revenue for Customs and Excise, is greater than it certainly has been for some previous years. . . . No doubt, if we only look to recent years, during which we have become accustomed to a low Income Tax, the rate this year may seem disproportionately high; but, if we look further back, the case bears a different aspect. In 1859-60, when the Income Tax was at 9*d.*, the payments into the Exchequer from Customs and Excise, calculated on the same basis as I have taken for the current year, were only £42,765,000. In 1860-1, with a 10*d.* Income Tax, they were £42,529,000. In 1861-2, with a 9*d.* Income Tax, they were £39,766,000. . . . I merely quote those figures to show that the present state of things is not entirely without precedent. It was, I daresay, to a great extent justified in the years to which I have alluded, as I am afraid I must justify it now, by the simple but very cogent argument that we cannot do without the money.—(*Ibid.* 133-4.)

The right hon. Gentleman added—

> "I am afraid, under the circumstances, the Income Tax payer must bear as easily as he can the 8*d.* Income Tax."—(*Ibid.* 137.)

Thus we have a condemnation from the right hon. Gentleman of the duty on alcohol, because it is a falling revenue. The increased Tobacco Duty has also fallen far short of the results expected from it. The right hon. Gentleman abandons tea as impossible; and sugar is one of the greatest comforts of the poorer classes. Tea and sugar should not be taxed except in times of great emergency. There remain, no doubt, the Death Duties, and everybody admits that they must be dealt with, and that there is an unfair distinction at present between Succession Duty and Probate Duty; but the subject is much mixed up with that of local taxation; and, with the prospect of a measure of local government upon us, it is, no doubt, desirable that these duties should be dealt with in connection with the re-adjustment of local taxation. Besides, it is very doubtful, according to the Estimate made last year, whether any large sum would be obtained immediately from any change to which the Death Duties could be subjected. If, then, we cannot meet this deficit by increased taxation, we can only meet it by some deduction from the sum now appropriated to the reduction of the Debt. I wish to state to the Committee what that fund is exactly. As things now stand, there is, in ordinary circumstances, an annual sum of nearly £7,000,000, available for reduction of Debt. In the century which elapsed between Blenheim and Waterloo we created a Debt of £870,000,000. In the 40 years succeeding 1815 the Debt was reduced by about £50,000,000, besides £50,000,000 which was newly incurred, but covered by reductions to an equal amount, and since the Crimean War there has been a reduction of £110,000,000. If the present Home Secretary's plan is strictly carried out we shall reduce the Debt by the end of this century, or the beginning of the next, by about £300,000,000; in other words, we shall have paid off in a century of peace—happily we may so describe this century up to the present time—£300,000,000 of the Debt of £870,000,000 contracted in a century of war. That is a long way from the fulfilment of the old maxim, that we should extinguish in peace the debts contracted in wars. The century of peace will have discharged little more than one-third of the liabilities accumulated in the century of war. In the 11 years from 1874 to 1885 we have reduced the Debt by £50,000,000; £19,000,000 were paid off between 1874 and 1880, and £31,000,000 between 1881 and 1886. The reduction during the last five years was, therefore, at nearly double the rate of reduction in the preceding six years. The Committee should understand exactly what is the provision for the reduction of the Debt. There is, first, the great fund of the Terminable Annuities, amounting to £4,770,000, provided from taxation. Then there are two Sinking Funds, one established by Sir Stafford Northcote in 1875, and the other created in 1881. Between them these three Funds produce £5,670,000 appropriated to the reduction of the Debt. There are, besides, other Funds which are not the produce of taxation, and which amount to upwards of £1,000,000 annually, and sometimes to considerably more. They are sums derived from Life Annuities, estimated at £800,000, from the composition for Stamp Duties, estimated at £200,000, and from the operations of the Land Tax Redemption and other sources. There is thus provided for Debt reduction this year a sum of about £6,750,000; and I am obliged to take something from that for the purpose of meeting the deficit and providing the country with a moderate surplus. The deficit is £540,000, and you ought to have a surplus of not less than £250,000; and therefore I propose to take from the Fund appropriated to the payment of the Debt the sum of £800,000. We shall not touch the great machinery of Terminable Annuities at all. But there are two Funds which are specially suitable for our purpose—namely, the new Sinking Fund, £613,000, and the Sinking Fund of 1881, £205,000, both of which are now applicable to the cancellation of Stock by purchase in the open market. This reduction of Expenditure by £818,000, the total of the two Funds, will convert the deficit of £544,000 into a surplus of £274,000. Sir Stafford Northcote, in his speech on June 28, 1875, distinctly contemplated the application of his Sinking Fund to such a purpose as this. The Committee will see that there will still remain in hand for Debt reduction in 1886-7 from Terminable Annuities £4,774,000, and from other sources £1,184,000, making together £5,958,000, or, in round numbers, nearly £6,000,000, for application to the reduction of Debt. It seems to me, under present circumstances, that that is as much as we can be expected to do. Let me now state what has been the result of the finance of the past year on Debt reduction. I give all these figures from the Return moved for by Sir John Lubbock, which is the only Table which presents an accurate view of the state of the Debt. And I would recommend any Gentleman who desires to understand this subject to make use of that Table, which gives results differing considerably from the ordinary Returns. The Debt on the 31st of March, 1885, was £710,856,000. We suspended last year the Terminable Annuities; we created an addition to the Unfunded Debt by Treasury Bills to the extent of £3,250,000, and we issued Exchequer Bonds for the Cape Loan of £400,000, together amounting to £3,650,000, by which the Debt was increased. But it has been reduced in the same period from various sources still in operation — namely, on the Funded Debt, £1,320,000; Annuities, £248,000; and on other heads, making in all £1,664,000. This reduction has also been augmented by increase of assets—namely, increased balances, £632,000; and recoverable loans, £400,000; amounting altogether, in round numbers, to £2,700,000. Comparing this decrease with the sum of £3,650,000, by which the Debt was increased, leaves a net increase of the Debt in the last financial year of no more than £950,000. On the 31st of March, 1885, the Debt was £710,856,000, and on the 31st of March, 1886, £711,813,000. We propose to further reduce the Debt during the present year by £6,000,000; and the Debt on the 31st of March, 1887, will therefore stand at £705,800,000, showing a total reduction in two years—1885-6 and 1886-7—of £5,000,000. Some persons, perhaps, would have preferred that we should have suspended for a time the Terminable Annuities for the purpose of liquidating the Treasury Bills; but that would only have amounted to paying off Unfunded Debt instead of Funded. On consideration of all the circumstances of the case, having regard to the fact that the amount of Floating Debt is not unmanageable, we have thought it best to allow the Terminable Annuities to remain untouched, and it is of great importance to maintain this powerful instrument for the reduction of Debt. The Unfunded Debt has stood for the last few years at £14,000,000, of which £3,500,000 are Suez Bonds which do not come into the market. It is now, including the recent Treasury Bills, about £17,600,000; but from 1878 to 1881 it was much higher. We find no difficulty in renewing Treasury Bills at a low rate. This is not unlikely to continue; and there is the further advantage about a Floating Debt that it can be reduced by instalments, and even temporarily, when the balances admit. It was therefore deemed better to allow the Terminable Annuities to proceed in their integrity rather than to suspend them again for the purpose of liquidating Unfunded Debt. We may look forward, as times improve, to the liquidation of this addition to the Unfunded Debt. With this surplus of £274,000 I cannot, as the Committee will easily suppose, undertake any serious operation for the remission of taxation; but there is one small thing which I am glad to find myself able to do. I have been pressed to give relief to the cottage brewers, whose licences stood originally at 6*s*. The right hon. Gentleman opposite very wisely reduced them to 4*s*. It has been represented to me that these cottagers—and I am confining this to cottagers in houses under £8—find this tax a great inconvenience to them, while it is of great advantage to them to brew in their own houses; and I propose to remit this licence altogether on houses below £8 valuation. This relief will free about 60,000 persons, and the loss to the Revenue will not be more than £16,000. This small reduction will reduce the Estimate of Excise from £25,710,000 to £25,694,000; and while the estimated Expenditure is £89,610,229, the total Revenue will be £89,869,000, leaving a net surplus of £258,771. I deeply regret that I am not able to propose to the Committee any serious reduction of taxation; but since 1875 this has been found to be impossible. In the last 11 years there have been numerous increases, but hardly any diminution, of taxation. The great and continual increase in the Expenditure of the country has led to an increase, not a decrease, of taxation. It is no longer our Revenue, but our Expenditure, which grows by leaps and bounds. If we want reduction of taxation we must go back to economy —to principles which were the basis of the financial policy of Sir Robert Peel and of the Duke of Wellington, who was not a man to be frightened into expenditure by scares, either professional or journalistic. His Administration, like that of Sir Robert Peel, will always be regarded as one of the most economical which this country has ever had. In my opinion, we are living too fast. The English are not naturally thrifty. They are a generous people, but not thrifty. I do not wish to be understood to say that the resources of this country are in any way impaired, or that the country is impoverished. I think that the facts which I have laid before the Committee show the contrary. The Revenue is sound, but we are using it up too fast. Habitual spendthrifts are very much like habitual drunkards—they have no reserve to fall back upon. There is a warning for us on the other side of the Channel which we may take to heart. We have not come to that pass yet; but we may well observe what are the causes of the gigantic Debt and the increased taxation in the French Budget. They are foreign expeditions, the extension of dominion, and great public works undertaken for the purpose of giving general employment. We have, in a lesser degree, suffered from the same causes; but we have not yet come to the same pass as that at which French finance has arrived. We are paying our way, and doing something more. We are discharging Debt to a moderate degree. We are still able, like a prudent parent, to lay up something for the future for his children who come after him. But I mention these things in order to entreat the Committee to resist the perpetual demands that are being made from every quarter for further expenditure. I hope the Committee will take up that attitude. It is for the interest of all Parties in this House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Strand (Mr. W. H. Smith), on the Budget of 1884, used these words—

> "The Government, after all, are responsible for the Expenditure of the country"—

that is quite true; but the Government get driven very hard sometimes—

> "and it is their duty to see that the whole of the cost of carrying on the affairs of the State are brought within such reasonable limit as the trade and commerce of the country justifies. We are now in a condition of considerable trial in the country; and it should be met as similar circumstances are met in connection with other concerns and in other places, by the exercise of the strictest economy and disregard of all pressure, and by a firm resolve that no right hon. or hon. Gentleman, whether responsible or irresponsible, shall force them to incur charges which bring no adequate return to the country, and inflict unnecessary burdens on the tax-payers."—(3 *Hansard*, [287] 561.)

These are very sound Treasury doctrines, and I only hope that the six months he has spent in the Capua of the War Office have not impaired these sentiments in the breast of the right hon. Gentleman. It may be said that I have laid before the Committee a very commonplace Budget. I shall be content to bear that criticism if it be admitted that, under the present circumstances of the people and of the finances of the country, it may be called a common-sense Budget. This is not a time for original Budgets or ingenuities in finance. When you are in a ship in bad weather sometimes the best thing you can do is to lay her to and not attempt to drive her. We cannot lay fresh burdens upon the people. What we have to do, I think, at the present time is to have patience, to exercise prudence, and to husband our resources for better times. If these are sound principles of finance, and if the proposals of the Government conform to them, I trust they may receive the favourable acceptance of the Committee. There are certain Resolutions which I desire to move with reference to the Tea Duties, the Income Tax, and other formal Resolutions which ought to be taken to-night, and which I now beg to submit to the Committee.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"(1.) That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, the Duties of Customs now chargeable upon Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say): on

Tea . . . the pound . Sixpence.

(2.) "That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Eight Pence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—

In England, the Duty of Four Pence;
In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Three Pence;

Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, and in section eight of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876,' for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds.

(3.) "That it is expedient to amend the Laws relating to the Inland Revenue and Customs." —(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I think the Committee will have felt that the interesting statement which the right hon. Gentleman has made has done all the more credit to his ability and industry, because, owing to the somewhat unfortunate circumstances of his position, he really had so very little to say. Now, Sir, none of us, I imagine, could have expected anything in the nature of what is called a sensational Budget; and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that we cordially sympathize with the strong expression of opinion which fell from him as to the financial difficulties of the present condition of the country, and as to the necessity for great economy in our administration and expenditure, and that we shall be delighted to see him put his principles into practice. Sir, I am not quite sure that a year ago, if the right hon. Gentleman had filled the Office which was then occupied by the right hon. Gentleman next him, the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), he could, with quite so much satisfaction to himself, have expressed to the Committee those strong opinions upon the necessity of economy, when he would have been obliged to call upon Parliament to meet the enormous expenditure which Her Majesty's Government of that day wasted in the Soudan. But now, Sir, we are asked to consider what the right hon. Gentleman has characterized as merely a normal Budget; and I must say I regret, in the first place, that in a mere normal Budget we should be asked to sanction an Income Tax of 8*d.* in the pound. When I asked the House last year to fix the Income Tax at that limit, I stated at the time that it was merely, as I hoped, a provisional request, and that if it fell to my lot to propose the Budget this year, I hoped to be able to reduce the figure to a lower point. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman has not felt himself in a position to do so. I do not say this in any degree by way of criticism or blame. The right hon. Gentleman has dilated upon the great falling-off in the receipts of the past year from spirituous liquors. I am anxious to say a few words to the Committee upon that subject, because I think the speech of the right hon. Gentleman this evening has proved a remarkable justification, not merely on that point, but also with regard to his own refusal to increase the Death Duties on real property, of the Amendment which I was fortunate enough to carry last year on the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh. Sir, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has, I think very properly, said that everybody feels that the Death Duties and Local Taxation must be dealt with together. If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh had been of that opinion last year, I think it would have saved the Government, of which he was a Member, from the defeat which terminated their tenure of Office. I can only express my extreme satisfaction that on considering the matter the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken a different view. Then, Sir, with regard to the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman for meeting the deficit of the ensuing year. He informed the Committee that he anticipated a deficit of £543,000; and he proposed a mode of meeting it to which, subject to further consideration as to the particular Sinking Fund by suspending which the deficit should be met, I am not going to raise any objection on principle. But he does not propose to deal in the same way with the deficits of the two previous years. He prefers, I understand, to try to meet them from the balances, or from the accruing surplus Revenue.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: My proposal is to meet them by Treasury Bills.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Quite so. I understand that the right hon. Gentleman proposes to renew the Treasury Bills, from time to time, keeping this Floating Debt in its present condition until it can be paid off from the accruing surplus Revenue. Well, Sir, the wisdom of that course depends on two things—namely, the rate of interest at which the right hon. Gentleman is able to borrow on Treasury Bills, and the justice of his sanguine estimate of the possibilities of the Revenue. I understand from him that the rate of interest on Treasury Bills is still as low as when I left Office; and if that is so, no doubt it may be good policy to pursue the course he has informed us of to-night. In his Estimate of Revenue I should think he is rather too sanguine, and perhaps he will give some reason for that Estimate later on. No hon. Member, I think, can be surprised at the difference which has unfortunately occurred between the Estimates of the Revenue from Customs and Excise, and the actual receipts during last year. My Predecessor estimated, as I did in the year just concluded, a revenue from Customs of £20,000,000. The receipts have been less than that by, I believe, £173,000. That seems to me to be no large difference, considering the very exceptional circumstances of the year, and the extraordinary elements of uncertainty that have involved all commercial transactions. For example, who could have expected that, even in spite of the recurrence of the General Election in the autumn, the receipts from beer and spirits would have diminished to the extent they have diminished? I proceed now to the falling-off in the Excise receipts. The right hon. Gentleman told us that the falling-off in beer had been £90,000 more than the Estimate, and that the falling off in spirits had been £790,000. He attributed this to two causes—in the first place, I think, to habits of greater temperance; and, secondly, to a preference on the part of many people to expend their money in other ways, rather than to any very great depression. But, Sir, he omitted to notice one great cause of this falling-off, to which I should like for a few minutes to call the attention of the Committee. It appears to me—and I speak with experience gained from the opportunities which, of course, I had of communication with the able authorities of the Excise—that the falling-off is in no small degree due to the unfortunate disturbance of the trade by the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) last year to increase the duties on spirits and beer. Now, Sir, what has happened with regard to beer? I have no doubt whatever that what happened was this—that the brewers anticipated the call that would perhaps be made upon them to meet that increased duty which was then proposed by the right hon. Gentleman opposite by, to speak plainly, watering their beer; and thus a decrease in the Excise receipts from beer has occurred which the right hon. Gentleman never in the least anticipated. With regard to the duties on spirits, the spirit dealers, I believe, simply reduced their usual stock; and, having regard to the diminished consumption of spirits, and the continued depression of trade, they found out they could continue their business with smaller stocks than they had been accustomed to, and have not considered it necessary to raise them again. Therefore, in both cases, the result has been a larger loss to the Revenue on beer and spirits than would have occurred if the right hon. Gentleman had never tampered with these duties last year. I ventured then to say that the proposal to increase the duties on beer and spirits was financially unsound. I said that the Revenue from these articles had been decreasing, and on the 10th of July I informed the House, on the authority of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, that the decrease on spirits would probably be £150,000 more than had been estimated by the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman on the 16th of July, speaking, as he said, with the entire agreement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone), directly contradicted me. He told us that there had been an increase in the yield from the Beer Duty during the previous three years, and that it was not true, as far as the Beer Duty was concerned, to say that the Revenue from it was decreasing. He admitted that there was a decrease in the Revenue from spirits; but he said it was considerably under 1 per cent upon the previous three years ending 1884-5, and certainly was not such a decrease as to interfere with financial operations which might, on other grounds, be advisable. Those arguments were brought forward to show that there was no ground for my charge against him that he had committed a grave financial error in proposing this increase, looking at the existing condition of the Revenue from the beer and spirit trade. Well, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman said that it was beyond question that the Revenue from beer, regarded solely as a matter of Revenue, might be raised from 2*d.* to 3*d.* per gallon with the greatest possible ease; and that it was perfectly possible to raise from liquor, if Revenue only were considered, between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000 more than is raised at present. I think the result of the finance of last year has shown how singularly deficient in financial foresight the right hon. Gentleman was when he made the proposal which was rejected by the House of Commons. What has the Successor of the right hon. Gentleman told us to-day? He has compared the receipts in the last year with those of 1875-6; and the comparison has shown that, in spite of the increased duty upon beer since that time, the total receipts from beer and spirits have sunk from £30,209,000 to £26,830,000 in the year just concluded. No wonder that he prefers to raise the necessary Revenue by maintaining the 8*d.* Income Tax without copying his Predecessor's mistake of trying to obtain a corresponding increase in indirect taxation from beer and spirits. And, Sir, that is not all. The right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has made, I think, a very sanguine Estimate of the receipts from these sources of Revenue for the coming year. He has estimated the probable receipts from the Excise at £250,000 more than the actual receipts during the past year, and he also anticipates a very small decrease in the Customs. All I can say is that, having regard to the enormous Excise decrease of £790,000 in spirits and £99,000 in beer during the past year, that seems to me to be a very sanguine Estimate. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to an opinion which I ventured to express last year—that in times such as these we had arrived, for the purpose of Revenue, at the limits of increased taxation upon the most important taxed articles of consumption. I was told that I had by that statement sounded the death knell of indirect taxation; but I fear that I merely stated what the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has found to be an unpleasant truth. I went on to say that the principle which the right hon. Gentleman had enunciated, that the whole additional taxation in times like these should not fall upon property, could not be carried out without the addition of some articles to our Customs tariff. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer has shown to-night how the expenditure of the people has changed from an expenditure on intoxicating liquors, which are the subjects of taxation, to an expenditure on petroleum and furs and other articles, which are not subjects of taxation. Would the right hon. Gentleman like to propose the taxation of these articles? I do not think he would care to make any such proposal. Surely the condition of our system of indirect taxation is hardly satisfactory when, even in a normal year, we are unable to do without an 8*d.* Income Tax. The right hon. Gentleman, although he alluded to these articles, has not been able to find one upon which he could impose a new tax. He cannot increase taxation upon those articles which have hitherto borne the brunt of indirect taxation—namely, beer and spirits; and, therefore, he is reduced to the necessity of keeping up the Income Tax at a rate at which it certainly ought not to stand in ordinary times of peace, if it is to be available as a great and powerful engine in time of war. This is one result, no doubt, of the financial policy of the past 40 years. Year by year one article after another has been removed from our Customs tariff. Of course, very great advantages have followed to the commerce of the country from that policy; but the result of it has been to place the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the day in the difficulty in which the right hon. Gentleman now finds himself. I was looking back the other day to the Budget debates of 1852, and I found a very pregnant sentence used by the Earl of Beaconsfield, who denounced as most pernicious to the country the system of getting rid of indirect taxation upon every article of consumption, and, at the same time, levying direct taxation from a very limited class. What remedy does the right hon. Gentleman propose? He tells us that we must reduce our Expenditure. How are we going to reduce our Expenditure? He says that we must not agree to any proposal from one side of the House or the other for increasing the Expenditure on our Army or our Navy, or to Motions such as that carried, I am sorry to say, by the hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) for the reduction of the charge upon telegrams. There is a great deal of force in that appeal of the right hon. Gentleman, if it would only be remembered by the House when such proposals are made; but I must say that it applies more to proposals such as that of the hon. Member for Glasgow than to the increase of Expenditure upon our Navy and our Army. At the same time, I am far from believing that our present Expenditure on the Army and the Navy might not produce better results than at present. I think that if it were possible for the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his Colleagues to inquire into the whole Expenditure of the Army and the Navy, in order to see whether the money voted is spent to the greatest advantage, a great deal might be done towards giving effect to those principles of economy which the right hon. Gentleman has advocated to-night; but I should be very sorry indeed if, on the plea of mistaken economy and foolish parsimony, this House should ever refuse to the Government of the day any Expenditure upon the Army or the Navy which is really necessary in the interests of the country. There is a way in which the present Government can really do much to further these doctrines of economy which the right hon. Gentleman has so very ably impressed upon the Committee to-night; they might do their best to teach their followers in the country and in this House that it is extravagant to the last degree for the State to attempt to make everybody happy and comfortable at the public expense. If that doctrine is preached—and it used to be one of the leading doctrines of the Liberal Party—I think the right hon. Gentleman on that Bench may, perhaps, be able to carry into effect the principles which he has put before us in his interesting statement this evening.

The SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I think in one respect the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has adopted a method which is not very usual on these occasions. I have been present at from 25 to 30 Budget speeches, and the custom has always been for an ex-Minister, and those who take an interest in finance, after the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made his statement, to ask questions in order to arrive at detailed information upon points which the Chancellor of the Exchequer may have omitted to deal with. But the right hon. Gentleman, instead of following that custom merely, has come down with an elaborate bushel of notes relating to my financial proposals of last year, without giving the smallest notification that he intended to depart from the usual practice, and thereby place me in the position of having to answer a most elaborate attack without the smallest idea of the subjects to which allusion would be made. Of course, the right hon. Gentleman is as capable as any Member of this House to raise the question which he has raised; but I could never have expected that the right hon. Gentleman would have brought down a series of notes for me to reply upon. But although I have had no notification, and am consequently speaking without preparation, I will endeavour to make to the Committee in a few words a statement which I think will show that the right hon. Gentleman has not quite done me justice. What I understand from the statement of the right hon. Gentleman is this—that last year, when I proposed certain duties, I did not estimate correctly the position of beer and spirits with regard to taxation, and that I made some very great mistake from which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer is now suffering. The right hon. Gentleman especially complained of the falling-off in the receipts from liquor as something which I ought to have explained to the House. Let me remind the Committee of what I did say last year. I proposed to the House a certain increase in the duties on spirits and beer, and I stated at the time just the reverse of what the right hon. Gentleman alleges. I stated that I did not expect to have the same quantity of spirits and beer consumed as would have been consumed under the former duties. But I think I estimated under the Budget of last year, if it had been adopted by the House, that there would be a falling-off in consumption of between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 gallons. I represented that there would be a large falling-off in the consumption of beer. I never dreamt of saying to the House that under the changed rate of duty there would be the same consumption as there would have been if the duty had not been extended. The increase of duty was, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, rejected by Parliament; but I do not wish to enter into that controversy, the subject having passed and gone. The disturbance which that occasioned in the trade undoubtedly led to a very considerable diminution in the consumption. The disturbance was a very great one; no one deplored it more than I did—it was a disturbance which might very well have led to the diminution in the consumption of spirit which my right hon. Friend has explained. If anyone has made a mistake it is the right hon. Gentleman himself, because we distinctly stated to the House that we did not expect the receipts from Customs and Excise together would be as much as they would have been under other circumstances. The right hon. Gentleman gave the exact figures of what he expected to receive under the heads of Customs and Excise; he never put down any diminution that might take place in the actual receipts; and, therefore, I say, if anyone is to be blamed in this matter, it is certainly not myself. I repeat that the dislocation which followed the rejection of the Budget led to a very large diminution in the receipts. Therefore, I am not to be blamed any more than the right hon. Gentleman because he did not take into account the falling-off which I expected, and which has actually taken place. The Budget of my right hon. Friend explains the circumstances very clearly; and, for the reasons I have given, I submit to the Committee that I am not open to the charge made by the right hon. Gentleman.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): It appears to me that on this occasion the Government have confounded economy with the avoidance of expenditure. I maintain that money invested in plant is a very different thing from money wasted. I had occasion to point out not long ago, when the Parcels Post had been introduced, that £200,000 had been expended in laying down plant; and the right hon. Gentleman, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and now Secretary of State for the Home Department, said that in consequence of the loss incurred in connection with the Parcels Post, which amounted to £200,000 or £300,000, he would be obliged to postpone the introduction of cheap telegrams for another year or two. When I asked what the loss was on the Parcels Post, it turned out that instead of its amounting to that sum the actual loss was a mere bagatelle, the rest of the sum having been invested in the plant necessary to carry on this business. Well, Sir, I say that in consequence of the delay in turning to account the money invested in plant the amount represented so much waste. Here, again, you have another case. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that last year there was a loss on the Telegraph Service of £147,000. But I ask how much of that is loss, and how much for investment in plant, necessary to meet the work due to the introduction of a lower rate? In introducing the Act of last year, Mr. Shaw Lefevre told us that there was a deficit of £190,000 on the year before; but he went on to explain that that included £175,000 which had been expended on plant. If I remember aright, the expenditure during the past year was exactly the same; and, therefore, the £147,000 which the right hon. Gentleman now speaks of is not loss, because there is involved in it the question of the amount expended on the extension of the telegraph system that was supposed to be required by the introduction of the 6*d.* telegram. But if you complain of waste, I maintain that the plan could have been carried out perfectly well with a smaller expenditure; indeed, I am informed by persons who, at any rate, know what they are talking about, that it might have been carried out at a very much smaller expense. However that may be, there is no doubt that during the time of the postponement an expensive staff was kept on, and expensive plant was lying idle, and that is what I understand by waste as distinguished from useful expenditure. But there have been other extensions of the telegraph system during the present year. The right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan), on introducing the Crofters Bill, told us how much the Government had done to benefit the fishermen in the Highlands by extending the telegraph system. What was done in that way has, no doubt, been included in the apparent loss. In the year 1875 there was a great loss on the telegraph system; and we were told by one of the officials—a gentleman of much experience and ability—that if we wanted to see what the postal telegraph system cost we must have an annual balance sheet made out on commercial principles, and for many years such a balance sheet was made out and presented to this House. But as soon as the reduction of the price of telegrams took place these inconvenient balance sheets were withdrawn; and now, when we are told in connection either with the Parcels Post or the 6*d.* telegrams that there is so much loss, we are unable to contradict it, because these valuable statements, which show exactly how matters stand, are no longer laid before us. I think it right to call the attention of the Committee to this question. There was a great deal of absolute waste in this matter, when £250,000 were expended on plant which was not put into useful operation in consequence of the alleged loss on the Parcels Post. And there was further waste when the delay of two months occurred last year, during which time an increased staff was kept on, and the wires were lying idle. I understand that with regard to Glasgow the expenses were more than realized; that the cost per telegram was less than had been expected, and that the increase in the number of telegrams was more than had been expected. There is, no doubt, a heavy loss to the country under the present system, and I would recommend the right hon. Gentleman to consider where economy can be effected. I think a great economy can be effected in the matter of way-leaves. The Railway Companies make a very good profit on the system along their lines. It has been shown by the Committee that a heavy loss is incurred by the present system. I do not wish to break any bargains made with the Railway Companies; but I think that when they come down to this House to ask for the extension of their monopolies, we might very fairly say that we shall grant them no such extension unless they make a concession in respect of the hard bargain we were compelled to make in the matter of way-leaves.

Mr. W. H. SMITH (Strand, Westminster): I think the hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) has slightly misunderstood the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If I understand the right hon. Gentleman aright, it is that the cost of transmitting these particular telegrams exceeds the amount received for them, and that, therefore, the greater the number of telegraphic messages the greater the loss. That is, of course, a very serious matter indeed, because it cannot be supposed that the people who send telegrams are not in a position to pay for the cost of transmission, putting out of consideration the cost involved in the acquisition of the Telegraph Service. The statement of the right hon. Gentleman I believe to be perfectly accurate, because I remember some time ago seeing an account which showed that the cost of each message then was 8*d.* or 9*d.* As the average number received is now somewhat less than it was then, and having regard to the fact that the State is placed at a disadvantage in the matter of labour as compared with private employers, I say it appears to me to be a serious matter that we should be engaged in so extensive an operation of business on conditions which must involve a larger loss every year in proportion as the amount of business transacted increases. The Secretary of State for the Home Department has questioned the statement of my right hon. Friend (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach); but I think it is clear that my right hon. Friend has, nevertheless, proved his case. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated that there is a great falling-off in the yield of the alcohol duties, and he stated that the Exchequer and the country lost by the fact that the spirits drunk contained a larger amount of water, the people being under the impression that they were buying something more valuable than that which they actually received. Well, Sir, that is very much the contention of my right hon. Friend. The disturbance caused by the proposal to increase the duty has produced changes from which Revenue does not speedily recover, if it recovers at all. These changes have given those engaged in the trade a method by which they can defeat the object of the Exchequer. They found themselves placed at a disadvantage for a short period; they found opportunities to their hands which they had not previously availed themselves of; they used them and have adhered to them since. I suggest to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer the consideration as to whether he has taken sufficiently into account the tendency to fall which is shown by the figures he has put forward to-night. He has shown that the Spirit Duties have fallen nearly £1,000,000, and he estimates that he is to lose during the year £127,000 on Customs, and to recover £250,000 on the Excise. Now, it occurs to me that there are influences in operation which are usually considered greatly to affect the Excise—that is to say, the conditions of labour, employment, and trade. I hope I am not taking too gloomy a view of the future; but there is one circumstance which is known to persons engaged in trade and monetary operations, and that is that the present year is conspicuous for the absence of enterprize, new undertakings, and new engagements, which promise the employment of large numbers of the working classes. Railway Companies are, many of them, delaying the completion of the branches for which they obtained powers some years ago; and, at the same time, they are not entering into any new engagements. There is a smaller number of Private Bills before Parliament this year than has been known for many years; and that, of course, means that there is a smaller amount of enterprize, and, consequently, a smaller amount of labour to be employed in the prosecution of enterprize, than would have been the case otherwise, with a corresponding diminution of the alcohol duties. Those duties are, of course, influenced by the increasing temperance of the people; but they must still be regarded as a barometer, affected by the amount of wages paid, and therefore as a test of the prosperity of the working classes.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I have not the Papers with me, but I may mention, in connection with this subject, the remarkable circumstance that in the first three months of this year a very great number—almost double that of previous years—of new Companies have been registered.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am exceedingly glad to be corrected in any view I express; but I think the right hon. Gentleman may be a little deceived by the simple registration of new Companies. There has, perhaps, never been a period during which so many Companies have been registered as in the past year; but they are merely transfers. They represent private undertakings converted into limited Companies, and are no criterion of prosperity; they rather indicate that individuals have found an opportunity of escaping from liabilities attaching to private enterprize, and of converting unprofitable into profitable undertakings. But I think the right hon. Gentleman has found that, so far as new undertakings which involve the employment of large numbers of the working classes are concerned, there is nothing of the kind going on to the extent which we have been accustomed to see for some years past. There has been, in fact, a falling-off; there has been a tendency on the part of large employers of labour to reduce the number of those whom they employ, and generally a sufficient indication that persons in the mercantile world wish to make their own businesses safe—to make good preparation for the future. I think, also, I am not asserting too much when I say that it is no longer in the power of the landowning class to carry out those improvements on the land which they have been accustomed to carry out; they do not see that they can with advantage proceed with improvements such as drainage, new buildings, improvement and repairs of farm-houses, and other matters that might be regarded as adding to the value of their land. These are, in my judgment, matters which call for serious consideration, and I trust the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take them to heart.

Mr. J. G. HUBBARD (London): The right hon. Gentleman has expressed an apprehension that the Budget which he has laid before the Committee may be thought commonplace; and he claimed for it, at all events, that it was a Budget of common sense. Well, Sir, in that last respect I think the right hon. Gentleman has claimed the highest quality for his Financial Statement, and it is one, I think, to which it is thoroughly entitled, The right hon. Gentleman alluded to the short period during which he had had to deal with the finance of the country, and to the circumstances in which he was placed, and he said that one of the consequences was that his Budget Statement contained no flights of fancy. For my own part, I always look on those flights of fancy in financial affairs with great alarm; and I have generally found them to end in the grief which follows upon promises unfulfilled. In the present instance, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, having the Estimates before him, finds that he can pay his way, but that he cannot pay off as large an amount of Debt as he could if he had a larger Revenue or less Expenditure; and, therefore, instead of adding new taxes, he says—"I will pay my way, and I will reduce my Debt by whatever surplus there may be at the end of the year." There is no doubt that the Income Tax, which has been commented upon as being high, is very high. But I must remark that the Income Tax is heavy, not because it is high, but because it is so unequal in its application; and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman may occupy his present Office long enough to re-adjust the mode in which that branch of the Revenue is collected. There can be no doubt that long ago the operation of this tax has been grievous in the extreme. What can be more cruel than to tax the precarious earnings of industry at the same rate as the permanent and continuous income derived from property? And the same may be said of the incidence of the Income Tax on landed property, which often for years has been deeply mortgaged at 4 per cent. The income which the owner of land so circumstanced has to pay upon is not the small residue which he receives, but upon an amount which includes all his outgoings, and that fact intensifies the charge upon him to a degree which he cannot bear. Then, all modes of conveyance—mortgages which have taken place with reference to real property—are also subject to the very serious charges which do not apply in the same degree and the same ratio to other classes of property. As I said, I hope the right hon. Gentleman will remain in Office long enough to re-adjust this system, for I am sure it stands in need of it. This re-adjustment has hitherto been utterly neglected; and I hope it has been reserved for the right hon. Gentleman to undertake the duty. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to make a very sincere promise of economy, and, at the same time, he addressed to the House and the Committee an exhortation to be economical in their demands. Now, I venture to say one thing for the country—the country does not want parsimony and economy; it values efficiency more than economy. The people do not want either the Defensive or Civil Services of the country screwed down to a degree which would make the Service or the defence of the Crown a scandal; they want economy, no doubt, but they want efficiency above all things. Having made these few remarks, I can sit down with the feeling that, happily, there is no element of danger contained in the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman; he has given us a Budget which, as far as it goes, is, I think, invulnerable.

Mr. SAMUEL MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): Having last month asked a Question of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the condition of the coinage—gold, silver, and copper—I hoped that some provision would have been made in the Budget for restoring, at least, the gold coinage to a satisfactory condition. It is generally admitted that 50 out of every 100 gold coins in circulation are so worn that they have no legal right to pass current at all. If they were taken to the Bank of England they would be cut at a loss to the holder of 3*d.* to 6*d.* each. If any hon. Member doubts that, let him take five or ten sovereigns to the Bank of England to exchange for a note, and he will find that he has to pay 2*s.* or 3*s.* for the privilege of making the experiment. But that is not all. The Bank of England holds generally £20,000,000 in gold, of which a large proportion must be in sovereigns, many hundreds of thousands of which are in such a delicate state that they will not bear the jolting of a railway journey, and a trip to the Continent would be fatal to their efficiency. In proof of that assertion, I hold in my hand an account of the Bank of England relating to 120,000 sovereigns withdrawn a few months ago and sent to the Continent. After a quiet stay there of a fortnight they were returned to the Bank of England in the same boxes, with the result that 1,499 of the coins were declared to be light, and a charge of £15 2*s.* 10*d.* was made on that account. When my firm complained of the loss, the answer was—"Oh, it is a very usual occurrence." It seems that when sovereigns are sent to Scotland they do not benefit by their trip; for, notwithstanding that they do not see the light of day there, and that they are returned in the same packages, a certain number of them are found to be light, and are destroyed in consequence. It is well known that there is an average loss of ½ per cent on gold taken out of circulation and paid into the Bank of England. Therefore, many millions of gold coins lie idle in consequence in the hands of bankers and others, with the result that any drain of gold is thrown exclusively upon the Bank of England. The rate of discount is frequently affected by this, and I have known the withdrawal of a few hundreds of thousands to send the Bank rate up, and put a tax upon the trade of the country greater than the value of gold exported. I would remark that they manage these things better in France, where the Bank rate has not changed for years. There is also great steadiness in the Bank rate in Germany, Holland, and Belgium. The most evident cause of the lightness of our gold coins is that they have been too long in circulation. I do not think that anything has been done to restore the gold coinage during this century. Another cause of lightness is that the metal of which the coins are made is too soft. We use 22-carat gold, or 11-12ths fine, whereas most other countries use gold only 9-10ths fine; and the consequence is that our gold coins wear away quicker than do napoleons and American eagles. Very few countries adopt our standard. Russia has the imperial; but gold does not circulate there at all. Portugal and the Brazils employ similar gold to ours. But the Brazils have a forced paper circulation, and therefore need not be taken into account; while Portugal has very little gold coin current. If we were to apply a small dose—say two grains—of copper to each sovereign, its life would be prolonged to double the extent, and the intrinsic value of the coin would remain the same. That increase of weight would represent just about the difference between light and heavy gold. The only use to which 22-carat gold is applied is in the manufacture of wedding rings, which can be continued. I should be glad to see gold 9-10ths fine used for our standard in this country. Besides the effect upon the gold coinage, it might be the first introduction of decimals in weights and measures, as well as in the gold standard. Of course, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will tell us that this restoration of the gold coins would involve a large expenditure, and that it was estimated to cost £500,000. Mr. Birch, I believe, puts it down at £800,000, although I think £500,000 is nearer the mark, because more sovereigns are exported than are returned. English travellers take away a large number of sovereigns, and I am sure they do not bring them all back again. They are spent abroad and are melted down there; therefore I think that £500,000 would restore the gold coinage to its original state, and be a credit to the country. I suggest that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might get this sum, and even more, by issuing 2,000,000 Treasury notes of £1 each; of that sum £500,000 could be used for restoring the gold currency, and the remaining £1,500,000 invested in Consols, which would yield £45,000 a-year, and thereby provide sufficient for keeping up the gold standard and for making good the wear and tear of the notes. I should be considered a radical financier if I proposed to make a legal tender of these notes without keeping gold against them; but I do not propose that they should be a legal tender. Let them be received by the Post Office, Customs, and for taxes, and they would then be very acceptable to the people. The prejudice against £1 notes originated in their being forged in former times; but that danger has passed away, and in Ireland and Scotland they are now very welcome. Two-thirds of the note circulation are in £1 notes—namely, about £4,000,000 in Ireland, and about £2,000,000 in Scotland. I do not think it would be useful at present to issue a larger amount of these notes than £2,000,000; but in Germany they have about £8,000,000 in Treasury notes, against which there is not more than £6,000,000 in gold, which is kept as a war reserve. After nearly 40 years' experience in dealing with currencies of all kinds, I feel justified in offering these few remarks to the Committee.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I shall not detain the Committee at any length in offering to it the few observations I have to make in connection with the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He has explained, in the most clear and powerful manner, that an extra expenditure of £5,000,000 represents the net result to the English taxpayer of the last six years of government. But the point I wish to refer to is not that of Expenditure, but of the Revenue; and I confess that I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Westminster (Mr. W. H. Smith) in having the gravest apprehension that the people of this country have not that capacity to pay which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has attributed to them. The right hon. Gentleman has given us six grounds on which he thinks the people have this capacity to pay. He tells us that on tea and tobacco there may be an increase of more than £1,500,000, and then he proceeds to say that the people spend a great deal on bacon, oranges, petroleum, furs, and sugar — that is to say, that there is an increased amount spent upon those things. Now, I have recently made inquiries into the sales of bacon and salted provisions, with the view of finding out what was the produce of Ireland, and it seems to me that the increased expenditure which the right hon. Gentleman supposes is upon bacon imported from abroad; but while the people spend more upon foreign bacon they are spending less upon bacon from Ireland; and, therefore, I am of opinion that there is no real increase in the amount spent under this head. Upon fruit, no doubt, there is an increased expenditure; but it is a very trifling one, and is due chiefly to the increased facilities for bringing the fruit here by steamer. With regard to petroleum, I do not think the expenditure is more, but rather less, than it was; but the people get a better light than they did for their money when it was spent on tallow. As to furs, we expected the right hon. Gentleman would draw a grand picture of the increase of luxury in this Kingdom, and of a large result from sables and ermines; but he merely explained 'furs' by saying that we were spending more upon hare and rabbit skins. I would point out to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that his boasted legislative action has had the effect of destroying hares and rabbits, and now, instead of having our own, we import them from abroad. ["No, no!"] If that is not so, why is the price of these articles of food higher than it ever was before in the manufacturing districts of England? The right hon. Gentleman must know that in Stockport, Derby, Liverpool, and other places, they have risen in price since the passing of his Hares and Rabbits Bill. Then we come to sugar; and of this, no doubt, we import a great deal more than we did formerly. Not many years ago we imported 30 lbs. per head of the population, and now we import 70 lbs. per head. It cannot be said that we eat twice as much sugar as we did before. The fact is, we are using it in manufactures in which it could not formerly be used on account of its price; but the people do not spend more on sugar; on the contrary, I believe that for the purpose of private consumption they spend less; and to say that we import more is no proof that there is more private consumption. The next point is the improved capacity of the people to pay Income Tax. Now, Sir, I should like to point out that if there is an improvement in this respect the Income Tax does not touch the profit or earnings of the working classes, and even if it maintains its old reputation this is no indication whatever of the capacity of the working classes to pay.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The figures are clear upon that point.

MR. BADEN-POWELL: It does not show the capacity of the working classes to pay. No doubt, there is a marked increase in the investments in savings banks; but I may point out that when Mr. Giffen made an inquiry into the incomes of the population he found that incomes between £70 and £120 had very largely increased in number; but some of us also found evidence that this was not a building-up from below, but that it has been brought about by a reduction of incomes that used to be above £120. I do not know, but I believe there is a feeling in the country that a great many persons are going to the savings banks who used to go to county and private banks; and therefore it must not be considered that the deposits belong to the working classes alone. No doubt, much is due to the facilities afforded by Government that the custom is spreading among the working classes of making these deposits; but again I say that we have in that no proof of the capacity of the people to spend more money. I hope the matters I have pointed to will draw from the Chancellor of the Exchequer some further proof that he is justified in anticipating an increased Revenue this year. Finally, I wish to point out what appears to be an omission in the Budget; and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to explain why there is no mention in the Budget of the transference of Debt to Ireland, or of any contribution from Ireland.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): This Committee has been so very like a happy family, that I feel I shall be almost to blame if I say anything that may disturb it. I do not like to allow the opportunity to pass, however, without expressing my regret at observing in the Budget a departure from the severe view of finance which the Prime Minister adopted down to last year—namely, that you ought to meet your liabilities without disturbing the financial arrangements made by your Predecessors for the reduction of Debt. I make these remarks because I think that Her Majesty's Government, in departing from that principle, have followed a course which they have formerly condemned. A burnt child is afraid of fire, however; and, having burned their fingers last year, I am not surprised that they have not tried the same thing this year. But it is a very easy road which leads backward, and I am afraid it will be found by the Government that it is a very easy road which enables them to depart from their previous policy, because it must be remembered that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not only failed to provide for the deficit of the present year, but he has not touched the deficits of the two previous years, which have been carried forward to this year by means of Exchequer Bills, and the consequence is that the right hon. Gentleman has to deal with £500,000 *plus* something more than £4,500,000, which is the sum Her Majesty's Government is compelled to provide and carry over to another year. As I have said, in a severe view of finance, we ought to meet these liabilities; and I am compelled to put this view before the Committee, because it prevailed last year when the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister was also in power. Leaving that general question, I must confess that I am a great deal surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should, as it were, have called France black in connection with its expenditure on foreign expeditions. It might shrewdly be suspected that Her Majesty's Government have spent a great deal more on foreign expeditions than the Government of France have spent. In the case of Egypt, for instance, the Government of France refused to send an expedition there; but Her Majesty's Government sent an expedition. The right hon. Gentleman in the course of his speech said there would be no Vote of Credit asked for this year. There is only ordinary expenditure before the House; but it seems to me that the extraordinary expenditure which the House is somewhat unwilling to face is really concealed in this proposal. I believe that the £2,000,000 excess in the Army Estimates are really due to the expenditure on the Army maintained in Egypt. There is one more criticism I wish to make. I cannot find that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made any provision for the new Government proposed to be set up in Ireland, without which provision I do not see how that Government is to be started, if it ever will be started.

Mr. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N. Lonsdale): Perhaps the Committee will extend to me its indulgence for a few minutes. The incidence of the Income Tax should be dealt with by someone more qualified as a speaker than myself, though I doubt if anyone can speak who had felt that incidence more than I have done in connection with certain large industrial concerns. I cannot agree that the figures which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) has put before us to-day indicate properly what are the industrial resources and income of the country. It may happen that in a very bad year he will receive from certain sources a larger income than in other years. There are certain bad years, such as those the people occupied in trade have of late passed through, in which it frequently happens of necessity that a higher rate of Income Tax is to be put upon us than in those prosperous years in which we can better afford to pay. I will illustrate the fact by a few figures which have occurred to me since I came down to the House to-day. It must be remembered that in estimating their income certain industries are allowed to take an average, sometimes of three years, sometimes of five years; and it is in regard to this burden I wish to speak. Let us take a period of 10 years in all. I have put down certain figures which I mean to represent thousands of pounds. I take the figures 30, 32, 36, 38, 44. These divided by five give 36: the rate of Income Tax that year 2*d.* in the pound. The following year I add the figure 60, and the figure 30 comes off; the result is 42, with, we will say, a 3*d.* Income Tax. The following year I add 66, and take off 32; the effect is 48⅘, and we will assume the rate of the Income Tax stands at 4*d.* in the pound. The following year we will adopt 50, and take off the 36; that gives 51⅗, and we will suppose the Income Tax is at the rate of 5*d.* in the pound. The following year we adopt 36, and knock off 38; the division is 51⅕, and we will say there is an Income Tax of 6*d.* In the last year of the 10 we drop down to 30 again, and take off the figure 44; the division is 48⅖, and it may be that the Income Tax is at the rate of 8*d.* in the pound. It is manifest that an Income Tax charged at the rate of 8*d.* on 48⅖, when the profit made during the year is only 30, is a much more serious burden than an Income Tax at the rate of 4*d.* paid on 48⅘, the income that year being 66. I think the incidence of the tax is so heavy in the case of bad years that if an average of years is to be taken in the matter of the capital sum, an average, also, might reasonably and properly be taken of the Income Tax during the same period. I see no justification whatever for a heavy burden falling upon a bad year like the one just closed, or upon this year, which apparently will be as bad as its immediate predecessor. Business men will tell you they cannot make their calculations for the proper balancing of books even, because they do not know at what rate the Income Tax will fall. This is one point to which I should have liked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he had been present, to have turned his attention. There is only one more point upon which I wish to detain the Committee. It came within my experience a few years ago that a Return had to be made of the outlay on capital account. The tax collector considered that in opening up a mine the money laid out was not to be put down as payable out of the resources or revenue of the year, but was to be charged as a capital sum. Inasmuch as that was so taxed it really became so much capital taxed. The tax collector rested his action upon a decision in some Scotch Court. I have no doubt the Committee must be well aware there are not many firms in the country who would care to contest in Court a decision —certainly not in any Court in England —a decision which had been given in a Scotch Court. The ways of the Scotch are beyond our English ways. But the point is this—and I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give his serious attention to it. In many parts of the country work is let upon tribute; the opening up of a mine depends very often upon the enterprize of three or four individuals with very small capital, and in many cases the opening up of the mine may, within the limited period of five years, mean the destruction of the shaft sunk, and the loss of all the capital expended upon it; and yet during the five years we are not allowed to deduct that loss from our profits, but are made chargeable with it. I should like to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, either in the House or by some private communication, what his views are with regard to this point, and whether there is any probability that the zeal and ability shown by his tax collectors throughout the country in searching out additional cause from year to year for taxing incomes of various kinds, principally those relating to industries which are heavily burdened enough already, will be abated, and whether he will endeavour to discover some means by which we may be exempted from a tax which, as we think, falls very unjustly and harshly upon us?

Mr. MORE (Shropshire, Ludlow): Having been long associated with the agitation for the repeal of the Malt Tax, and especially for the exemption of private brewers from taxation, I beg to tender my best thanks to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the great concession he has made to our private brewers. I am sure this concession is one which will be a great relief to the labourers throughout all the counties with which I am acquainted, and will be fully appreciated by them. It is one which I hope no public brewer will begrudge. Twenty years ago, during the time of the agitation for the repeal of the Malt Tax, I took the trouble to go round to some of the brewers and ascertain their opinions upon the question of the exemption of private brewers from taxation, and after that Earl Russell addressed inquiries to the Consuls and Ambassadors abroad in regard to the legislation respecting brewing, and especially private brewing. He found that in different parts of Germany there were different exemptions. In Austria exemption was made according to the amount brewed, and in Prussia there was exemption on the brewing of ordinary beer in all families of not more than 10 persons under 14 years of age. Some hon. Members may have heard with dissatisfaction how farmers are to be affected in respect to private brewing; but I wish to point out to them, if they will allow me, that by their own exertions they can obtain relief for a great number of farmers. In the county in which I live, when the Malt Tax was changed to a Beer Tax, we got together about 200 farmers, and, taking advantage of the very narrow definition of a house in the Act, induced them to appeal against their assessments. We succeeded in getting exemptions for the great majority of those farmers, they being able to prove that the houses they occupied were under the value of £15 a-year. I have no wish to trespass longer upon the attention of the Committee. I will simply add, Mr. Courtney, that I think the labourers will consider this boon as the first direct result of their representation in this House. Their success on this occasion is all the more signal, because they are the only class of Her Majesty's subjects who in this Budget have made a successful appeal to the consideration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I do, indeed, sincerely congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the most lucid and common-sense Budget he has laid before us; but, while I do so, I wish to express on behalf of the great mass of the working people of this country the great regret and disappointment that he has not seen his way to reduce the duty on tea and other popular articles of consumption. We feel that there are other articles which may well be taxed to make up for the remissions of duties which we advocate. I am very glad indeed to hear from the hon. Member for Shropshire (Mr. More) that he thinks the labourers in Shropshire will be benefited by the repeal of the private brewing tax. In my own county there are so few cottagers who brew their own beer that the reduction will have very little or no effect. I do not desire to detain the Committee at any length with any remarks of mine. I have a Motion upon the Paper of the House; but our Rules prevent me in any way anticipating the discussion upon it. I will only say that most sincerely did we hope that in this Budget, at any rate, we might have received some recognition of the principle which has been put forward, and which, I believe, is regarded with great favour by the vast majority of the working people of the country—that if there is such a raising, and proper raising, of the cost of producing manufactured articles in this country by the enactments which have been very properly passed for the protection of the working people, we are not protecting the workmen completely if we allow goods to be brought into this country free from all duty—not articles of primary necessity, not articles of consumption, but articles which are simply used as luxuries, and which displace similar articles which the workmen of this country can produce and have a right to see produced by them. What we say is this—that it is upon such articles that the duties should be placed; that you may well take off £5,000,000 duty upon tea and the like, and best replace it by placing Import Duties on manufactured goods which come into this country, which displace the articles which should be produced here, which do not in any way minister to the necessities, but merely the luxuries of those who can well afford to pay duty.

Mr. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I think that in some respects the Budget which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has introduced this evening is simplicity itself. It is a Budget which most of the business men in the House were quite prepared for after seeing the Estimates which were submitted to hon. Members some time ago. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) complained that it was unfortunate that we should have, on the present occasion, to face an 8*d.* Income Tax; but I should like to know who is responsible for such an Income Tax? Are not right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite more responsible for it than any other Gentlemen in the House? ["No!"] Well, we on this side think so, and, of course, hon. Gentlemen opposite are quite at liberty to have their own opinion in regard to it. Had the duties which the late Liberal Government proposed been adopted, I have no doubt we should have had a reduction of the Income Tax on the present occasion. The Tory Party chose to take a different view of the situation; the Liberal Government left Office, and an 8*d.* Income Tax was saddled on the taxpayers of the country, in order to nearly balance the accounts. But what I have to say in regard to this 8*d.* Income Tax is what I have said on a previous occasion. I see no reason whatever why our Estimates should not have been cut down by £10,000,000 sterling; and if they had been so cut down the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have been able to have told us to-night that he was in a position to reduce the Income Tax from 8*d.* to 3*d.* in the pound. That would have been a sensible relief, not only to the taxpayers of the country, but to the trade of the country. I see no reason whatever why these Estimates should not have been cut down by the amount I have named, considering the enormous fall in the value of everything which Her Majesty's Government require to purchase in connection with the Services. Instead of witnessing an increase in the Estimates during the last 10 years, we ought to have witnessed a great decrease. In the face of an enormous fall in prices, the Estimates have reached an abnormal height, such a height which had not been known since the Crimean War. That, I think, is the direction in which we ought to look for the reduction of the Income Tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, moreover, deserves to be congratulated on the fact that he does not require, on the present occasion, to increase taxation. The industries of the country could not have borne any increase. Everyone who has anything to do with the business of the country knows how very unprofitable it is at present; and, therefore, we ought to congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on having been able to nearly square his accounts without imposing any fresh taxation. It is true he has trenched on the Sinking Fund to the extent of £800,000. I think it is better he should do so than impose any fresh taxation. Some hon. Members complain that the right hon. Gentleman contemplates tampering with the Sinking Fund. I quite agree that, if we can, we should pay our way as we go on. If we always acted upon the principle of paying our way it would conduce very largely to economy, because whenever it is proposed to impose taxation people begin to look more closely into the accounts. If we could do without touching the Sinking Fund it would be much better. There are many Members of the House who have watched the taxation of the country for many years; and there is one point which the Chancellor of the Exchequer raised to-night—namely, that of the equalization of the Death Duties—which a great many Members of the House feel ought to be seriously pressed. If the right hon. Gentleman had had the courage, notwithstanding the opposition of hon. Members opposite, to propose an equalization of the Death Duties, and thus endeavoured to bring about a certain balancing of the accounts, I am perfectly sure that this House would have supported him. Last year the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) estimated that an equalization of the Death Duties would produce between £150,000 and £200,000. That would have gone a considerable way towards making up the deficit. This is one of the points in respect of which the Budget might have been improved. Another point I wish to refer to is the introduction of the 6*d.* telegram. The hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) fought the battle of the 6*d.* telegram and fought it well, and the commercial community feel that they have got in the 6*d.* telegram a great boon. I was surprised, however, to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer say that the 6*d.* telegrams had resulted in a loss to the country. Now, I do not think it has been proved that a loss has accrued. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Strand Division of Westminster (Mr. W. H. Smith) tried to explain to the hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) that there was a loss, but I cannot see that he made the point at all clear; and, therefore, I should like to have some further information as to how the loss is made out. Do the Government say there is a loss upon the 6*d.* telegrams? Do we pay so much for the paper and for the messengers and for other expenses which causes the telegram to cost more than the 6*d.* which the sender pays? I presume there is so much charged for the use of the wires. I am told by persons connected with the Post Office that a large sum—I believe about £500,000—was laid out in the preparations for the 6*d.* telegrams. I cannot see why every farthing of that amount might not have been saved, and why we might not have had 6*d.* telegrams without any extra outlay at all. But that is not all. Telegrams have always, I believe, resulted in a loss, and why is that? Simply because this House made a very bad bargain in taking over the telegraphs, paying nearly double what they ought to have paid. A large sum as interest upon the capital has to be paid, and in consequence there has always been a loss. It has not been made out that there is a loss upon the 6*d.* telegrams, and in the absence of positive proof I decline to believe the statements made to that effect. Now, I should like to make a few remarks with regard to what fell from the hon. Member for Whitechapel (Mr. Montagu) concerning the coinage of the country. There is scarcely a sovereign or half-sovereign that is of the proper standard weight. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) tried to grapple with the fact; but he was baffled. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken a lesson from his right hon. Friend's non-success, and has not ventured to touch the matter. Now, I think it is of the utmost importance that we should have the coins of the country of the proper value. It is not at all satisfactory to a country like this that the coinage should be in its present condition. I do not wish to offer any suggestion at the present moment as to what should be done; but I have a word or two to say in respect of the Scottish £1 notes. We in Scotland sustain a great loss by the absurd law which requires that a certain amount of gold should be sent from England to Scotland twice a-year—every May and every November—in order to keep up the circulation. The gold is sent in boxes from the Bank of England to Glasgow and Edinburgh; without the boxes ever having been opened they are sent back to the Bank of England, and then the gold is always found to be light owing to transit. Although we in Scotland may never use the gold, we are called upon to make good the light weight. We do not want the gold; we are perfectly satisfied with our circulation; our £1 notes are preferred to gold. We believe the £1 note is more convenient than gold; it is certainly more economical. Upon this head I would like to make one suggestion. We do not understand the English prejudice to our £1 notes, especially when we bear in mind the great saving which their circulation represents. There are not less than £100,000,000 sterling in gold circulating in England at the present time—probably more than the sum named. If you substitute £1 notes for at least three-fourths of that circulation you would save in interest and the wear and tear of the coins not less than £3,000,000 sterling per annum. That is a moderate estimate of the saving; perhaps the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take note of it. I pass from that to the question of the sustained income of the country, notwithstanding the trade depression, as illustrated by the amount of Revenue derived from the Income Tax. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to the yield of 1*d.* in the pound, and thought it was satisfactory that the yield was as large as it was in 1882. While 1*d.* in the pound yields rather more than it did in 1882, the Chancellor of the Exchequer must remember that the population has very considerably increased since 1882, and that, therefore, the yield is not now as large relatively as it was in 1882. There is no doubt that the income of the country is falling. Mr. Courtney, I have but one other subject to refer to. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London (Mr. Hubbard) said he was very glad to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer make a strong speech in favour of economy. It rejoiced the hearts of most of the Members on this side of the House, especially of those below the Gangway, to hear that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is in favour of economy. But hon. Gentlemen opposite are afraid that we may impair our efficiency if we go in for too much economy. It appears to me that economy without efficiency would not be economy at all. We wish economy with efficiency, and we trust that the present Government will be able to practise economy in the way which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer indicated to-night. I am quite sure that the Members on this side of the House, particularly those who sit below the Gangway, will support the right hon. Gentleman in any effort he may make to cut down the Estimates.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I shall not interpose for very long between the Committee and the Business which I understand is principally to take place to-night, but I want to make one or two remarks in regard to matters interesting to myself, and also in regard to certain points that have been alluded to by hon. Members on the opposite side of the House, in casting certain aspersions on Members on this side. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Lanarkshire (Mr. Mason) who last spoke described the large Income Tax which this country is now paying as the product of Conservative administration. Well, I think we had some right to anticipate that if it is possible to find any mode of escape from the payment of so large a tax, it would have been discovered by the great financial abilities which adorn the Bench opposite. We cannot forget that the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, in 1874, proposed to do away with the Income Tax altogether. Upon that point he staked his political reputation; but in that very eventful campaign he was unsuccessful. Of course, I may be told—I probably shall be told—by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that times have altered, and that we are not in the same position now, financially, as we were then; but I think that for this side of the House to be taunted or twitted with the fact that we have a large Income Tax to pay, and to be told that it is our fault, is unreasonable in the last degree. The hon. Member for Lanarkshire further said that he believed a very much less Income Tax would suffice were we to reduce the expensive armaments which this country has already assented to. But why did not the hon. Gentleman protest when these Estimates were before the House? Why did not he and those Gentlemen who co-operate with him move the reduction of these Estimates? [An hon. MEMBER: So we did.] An hon. Member says "So we did;" but there was no vigorous protest against the expenditure of so much money. After all we heard during the Recess, and after all we heard during those many vigorous campaigns in the North, one would have supposed that a number of hon. Members from Scotland as well as from other parts of the country would have united and formed a strong phalanx to object to so large an expenditure. Hon. Members do not seem altogether to realize the fact that in some degree, at all events, that expenditure has not been so wisely dealt with and administered as it might have been. They ignore the fact that only last year, not 12 months ago, astonishing revelations were made at the Board of Admiralty. If they did not, they would not accuse hon. Members on this side of the House with being so anxious to perpetuate this large and, in their opinion, extravagant expenditure. We do not desire to keep up these payments to so large an extent if they are not necessary for the safety and protection of the Empire. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has shown that they are necessary by the facts of the case. Then the hon. Gentleman the Member for Lanarkshire referred to the Death Duties. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer has done a very wise and a very right thing in not endeavouring to impose the question of these duties on the House of Commons. He knows very well that land pays a very large amount of taxation which other kinds of personal property do not pay. He knows very well that hon. Members on this side of the House would not object to Death Duties being imposed on their land provided it were on all fours with other taxation, and in that respect I think he has done what is right and equitable. I cannot help thinking that the right hon. Gentleman has taken an inadequate view of the future, looking at the very large Supplementary Estimates which are continually brought in at the end of the Session. He has told us that he reserves to himself something like £258,000 surplus to meet any contingency that may arise in various unforeseen ways. How can he believe that sufficient? Considering our numerous engagements in so many parts of the world, considering our position as a vast Empire exerting so much influence on so many different portions of the world, it is only too probable that we may be entangled in some unforeseen difficulty or other during the year, which may cause us to spend far more money than this £258,000. Though there may be a certain amount of reason in the statement that this ought to be a suitable and proper sum to meet such contingencies, we know that year by year these Supplementary Estimates grow higher and higher, and that, instead of having the very moderate Estimate which we used to have laid on the Table, we now, as a rule, have a very large Supplementary Estimate to deal with at the end of the Session. Then there is another point to which I should like to draw the attention of the Committee, and it is this—that Chancellors of the Exchequer and hon. Members are too much accustomed to look upon the Post Office Department as a paying concern, from which they can always depend upon a large amount of revenue. The Post Office is a State common carrier, and as such I do not think we ought to look upon it as a revenue-earning concern, or, at any rate, not to the extent that Chancellors of the Exchequer too often do. We should know, those of us who live in somewhat remote parts of the country—and I speak as a Scotch Member—that there are many districts very imperfectly provided with postal accommodation. We must know that in the Western Highlands of Scotland there are large areas of country, inhabited, no doubt, by a sparse and scattered population, but still inhabited by many people, who have no means of access to the world, who live in an outer circle, as it were, cut off from communication with the rest of civilization, receiving no letters or newspapers with any degree of regularity. I do think it is the duty of any Post Office Department, or of any Chancellor of the Exchequer of a Government, no matter of what Party that Government is composed, to remedy this state of things. If you only look on the Post Office as a paying concern out of which you are to draw a very large sum, then I say you are looking at the matter from a wrong standpoint, and you will not be able to get the Department to do its duty properly. Reference has been made to the capacity for spending which seems to be inherent in the lower classes, in spite of the very great depression that is visible in every trade in the country. The right hon. Gentleman gave us some figures which, so far as they went, appeared to prove his case; but I am afraid that if he looks a little deeper into this matter he will find the thing is not so self-evident as he appears to regard it. There can be no doubt that the working classes have been in the habit of spending freely just as they have received freely; but those of us who know the country and have spent many years of our lives among the working classes know that they derive their rate of wages from the classes immediately above them, and that if those classes are unable, as many hundreds and thousands are or will be unable, to afford them good wages they will not have the capacity for spending large sums of money which they have had hitherto. No doubt they spend a large amount of money on bacon; but there are great industries in the country languishing for want of the support of these people with the spending capacity. I will take one illustration. Living, as I do, in a large dairy country, where the largest amount of Cheddar cheese, or cheese of other descriptions, is made in the United Kingdom, I am able to state that the farmers are in the position of being unable to sell the product of their industry. But why is this? It is because the people are buying large quantities of cheese of American importation. They are getting, besides large quantities of cheese, a great deal of foreign ham and bacon very cheap. They are not using up the food of their own country, therefore they are not spending the amount in that way that they used to spend; nor, in fact, are they spending the same amount in articles of food throughout as they were spending a short time ago. No doubt they are getting food a great deal cheaper than formerly; and though we may congratulate ourselves that we are not so badly off as the people of many other countries are, still I cannot imagine for a moment that the present condition of things will continue. But the main reason for my rising was to ask the right hon. Gentleman a question—namely, inasmuch as the Government have granted some benefit to the cottar population of the Southern part of Great Britain, whether he will not do another class of deserving people living in the North a good turn? I allude to the drover class. This is a very important class in Scotland—a class of very hard-working men. It is very hard that these people should not be exempted from the payment of licences for the keeping of their sheep-dogs. If they did not possess these dogs it would be absolutely impossible for them to earn their livelihood; but with these dogs they are able to make both ends meet. Now, I do not propose to go at length into this question. I could go back to the year 1796 if hon. Gentlemen desire it; but I will content myself by referring merely to the period of 1867; and I will only give the Committee one or two facts with regard to that period. In that year the duty was reduced from 12*s.* to 5*s.* for each dog, and in 1878 the licence duty was raised to 7*s.* 6*d.*, and the exemption in favour of sheep dogs was revived, dogs used solely by blind persons for their guidance, and hounds under 12 months, which had not been entered in or used with any pack of hounds. Sheep dogs, as I have said, were exempted up to a certain point. If a farmer with an ordinary sized farm, or a shepherd had two dogs, he had not to pay more. If a farmer had a large farm he was allowed exemption for four dogs for 1,000 sheep; and for every 500 sheep beyond 1,000 exemption for one dog additional, so long as the exemption did not extend to more than eight dogs; and that is how the law at present stands. But the drover class are not exempted, and this is the point I wish to bring before the right hon. Gentleman if he will give me his attention for a moment. The drover class, I say, are not exempted. They are a small class, and one possessing very few friends; but inasmuch as they are, generally speaking, very respectable men who from time to time are entrusted with large sums of money—who have to go to market and make purchases and bring back very valuable stock—I say they ought to have some little indulgence shown to them. We must recollect that the answer I got from the hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) was to this effect. I asked him some days ago whether he could see his way to exempting drovers from the payment of this dog tax? The hon. Gentleman answered "No," and he gave as a reason that since 1878 the amount of the duty collected had materially diminished, on account of the other exemptions which had been granted—namely, in the case of shepherds' dogs. When I looked up the reference I found that no doubt the hon. Member was perfectly correct. But this exemption which I ask the Government to make is, after all, such a small thing. I think the Return of the 31st of December for the year 1883-4 is the last one showing the amount of duty. In that year the duty paid was £335,537. The amount of duty paid on dogs in the year 1876, before the reduction of the duty in 1878 from 12*s.* to 5*s.*, was £340,544, and in 1877, the year immediately preceding that in which the reduction was made, it was £348,044. Therefore, to exempt drovers from paying licences would cost from £12,000 to £13,000. I think that, inasmuch as the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has considered the case of the cottars of the South, and has exempted all those who live in £8 houses from the payment of the 4*s.* licence for brewing at home, it would only be just to concede something to this very deserving class in the North. I hope that when he rises to make his reply, as he probably will do in the course of the evening, the right hon. Gentleman will accede to my small and reasonable request.

MR. L. COHEN (Paddington, N.): I trust the Committee will forgive me for trespassing upon its time; but there are questions of some importance which arise in connection with the statement of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. It has been remarked that to-night upon this financial business we are a very happy family. Well, some think that the happiness of families depends upon their being limited in extent. If these persons are right, no doubt we are able to congratulate ourselves upon one cause for happiness; but on other grounds, as a member of the great commercial family of England, I look with some degree of dismay on the rows of empty Benches which we have seen on this, which I consider the most important evening of the Session. That questions connected with an Expenditure of £90,000,000 sterling should fail to attract the commercial classes and Members generally in this House, I believe to be one of the main causes of all our political troubles, because I think that the prosperity of the country is closely and inextricably connected with sound finance and with those measures of good economy which it ought to be the duty of this Committee to review and to take into consideration. I think there is no circumstance in the condition of the people of this country so conducive to political disquiet, and even political disturbance, as that want of prosperity which I connect in some degree with bad financial administration and with a lack of due attention to the commercial questions which come before this House. There are certain questions which have been raised in the course of this debate with which I am not at all in sympathy. Widely as hon. Gentlemen have travelled in the course of this debate, I do not consider that the crucial point of the right hon. Gentleman's Budget has been sufficiently noticed. We have had some conversation as to the issue of £1 notes as a specific for commercial distress. The hon. Member for Whitechapel (Mr. Montagu) introduced the matter, and he suggested an issue limited to £2,000,000 sterling. That would not have a very large effect. I am not going to be drawn by the observations of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lanarkshire (Mr. Mason) into a currency debate on the present occasion; but I will say this—that if hon. Gentlemen think that they will find a solution for commercial difficulty, or even a substantial source of income to the State, in the extension of the note issue of the country, they found their observations upon a fallacy. It is impossible to extend the note currency to any extent without, at the same time, displacing an equivalent amount of the gold currency. It is not by putting out notes that you will create a larger amount of circulating medium. It is a question for the State whether or not, by issuing a certain amount of notes, they increase the revenue in their hands. So far as increasing the amount of distribution of notes is concerned, it is entirely new to me that that would be stimulated by the issue of £1 notes to any amount, unless they displaced a corresponding amount of gold. Looking at the interesting history which the right hon. Gentleman unfolded to us in connection with the social habits of the great majority of the people, and their effect upon the finance of the future, there was one point of view from which, I think, it must strike hon. Members with considerable apprehension. Supposing the temperance of the people to progress in the next decade as it has done in the last—supposing that wine, beer, and spirits should again yield to the Revenue £10,000,000 less during the next 10 years than it did in the past 10 years—are we then to be again restricted in our means of recoupment to throwing the burden of it upon the Income Tax paying class? If that is so, I say that it becomes a source of serious apprehension that the improvement in the habits of the people, which we know proceeds from temperance, is to be accompanied by an oppressive addition to the burdens upon a limited class. An allusion was made by the hon. Member for Mid Lanarkshire (Mr. Mason) to the pressure of the Income Tax on a particular part of the country which I do not agree with; but it must cause us serious apprehension if we are to confine the resources of future Chancellors of the Exchequer to that mode of taxation, and when we consider that during the whole of the 10 years in which this movement of decline in alcoholic revenue has been going on no attempt has been made to meet it except by fluctuations in the Income Tax, I cannot think that, in taking a Budget of £90,000,000 sterling, and bearing in mind that there have been circumstances which have disturbed the calculations of the past year to the extent of over £1,000,000 sterling, it is a safe provision to allow a margin of £240,000 only between Income and Expenditure. If that Bill which has occupied some of our attention, and is likely to occupy a great deal more of it, should ever make a call upon the finances of the country, it would certainly disturb the calculations of the right hon. Gentleman to a material extent; but, whether it passes or not, my contention is that it will create very great disturbance in the business of the country. The very introduction of the Bill will, in my opinion, cause such a further interruption of business as can only be paralleled by a General Election; and I contend that, whatever be the result, it is calculated to endanger the small margin which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has thought it sufficient to take. We have been accustomed to hear that criticism is in itself not sufficient, and that it is necessary that it should be accompanied by an alternative proposal. Now, I do not presume, being a young Member of the House, to propose an alternative Budget to the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but I venture, very respectfully, to advert to one or two points to which I think attention should be directed, and which are calculated in some degree to tend towards the removal of that depression which causes us so much anxiety. What I think we have to do, in the first place, is to remove the shackles which in any way fetter enterprize, and to do that in a way that will cause no loss to be sustained by the general income of the country. I do not propose to enter into the vexed question of duties on imports or the merits of the Customs Acts raised by the hon. Gentleman who spoke on the subject below the Gangway (Mr. Staveley Hill); I do not think it is the time to do so, nor am I entirely in accord with him on the matter. But there are one or two departments of Revenue which, I think, are susceptible of change, and which do not raise those large questions which are involved in the alteration of Customs Duties. I allude to the stamps on transfers. It has been my good fortune, or misfortune, throughout the greater part of my life to be connected with business affected b they Stamp Duties, and in relation to them there are two or three gross anomalies to which I desire to call the attention of the Committee and that of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There seems to me an immense anomaly in the fact of levying a tax of 10*s*. per cent on the transfer of securities which are constantly changing hands, while by some misjudgment you only levy a tax of 2*s*. 6*d*. on the transfer of what I may call permanent Stocks on which it ought to be higher. I contend that there has been a large and unnecessary loss inflicted on the Exchequer, which has been continued from year to year, by putting a tax of 2*s*. 6*d*. instead of 10*s*. upon the transfer of Debenture Stocks, which have swallowed up £200,000,000 sterling. Now this is a class of securities which change hands very seldon, and upon it a higher Stamp Duty would fall much less heavily than it does upon the securities I have referred to, which are constantly changing hands. The right hon. Gentleman is aware that I have endeavoured several times to persuade him to make a change in the general incidence of these taxes on transfers of Stock, and, as he has not fallen in with my views, it is not desirable that I should now weary the Committee by stating how they might be altered; but, speaking generally, I think that any scheme which would tend to free Corporations from the Stamp Duty on each transfer would also tend to some extent to remove the disability under which Companies are now labouring, and which operates as a serious detriment to trade; and I think that some such scheme should be devised, because anything which checks enterprize in trade and hinders the association of capital is, at the present time especially, undesirable and noxious. There is another point, a small one as it may appear, on which I can show how oblivious Chancellors of the Exchequer have been of the effect of some taxes. The amount received last year for the registration of Companies was £26,462. The Committee will, perhaps, be surprised to hear that 1,501 Companies contributed to that tax, which it will be seen amounts to about £17 on an average for each Company. Now, I contend that this tax encourages the registration of bogus Companies, and that it is a tax inflicted on a wrong system. A Company with a capital of £10,000,000 can obtain all the privilges of registration by the payment of this average sum of £17. This is the point to which I call attention, and I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he continues in Office, will not fail to observe what I have described, and endeavour to apply some remedy. A Company when it starts can afford to a pay a much larger fee than the merely nominal fee which the Government exacts; but when the Company is started, and the shareholders want to deal with their own property, you impose a tax on transfers which is prohibitory. Then there is another point which is larger in its bearing and effect upon the Public Revenue. I refer to Grants in Aid—the very system of which is a bad one. There is not the security there ought to be for the application of the money; it is a Vote over which you have no control, inasmuch as large amounts of money are voted and absolutely intrusted to Local Bodies. I believe the amount is £1,900,000. [Sir William Harcourt: It is not £1,900,000, but £6,000,000.] The Chancellor of the Exchequer says the amount of contribution is about £6,000,000. Well, Sir, that only strengthens the force of my argument. I do not know that I could meet the whole of that sum; but I do not despair of showing how it may be dealt with to a large extent. There is an increasing tendency at the present time on the part of individuals to live in clubs, in seaside towns, to live in flats in the Metropolis, and in the large towns in the Provinces. It is a habit which is growing, and which, at the same time, tends to free individuals from contribution to local taxation. Now, it seems to me a comparatively easy task to reach these individuals—although, not having had the honour to hold an official position, I cannot be supposed to know the exact procedure—but I say that there must be some means by which you can find out the places where these individuals reside, who draw large incomes, perhaps from the other side of the world, or from London, but who contribute nothing towards local taxation in the towns in which they reside. It must naturally appear that points on which I am only able to speak in this perfunctory manner must be crudely raised, nevertheless I believe that, by dealing with the smaller subjects which I have submitted to the Committee, you will have means by which you can free various branches of industry and enterprize which are at present held back; and I believe further that by the consideration of the larger question you will find some means of providing a substitute for these Votes in aid of local taxation. A very few other points remain to which I desire to call the attention of the Committee. I do not quite understand the right hon. Gentleman to explain why we have not this year received £211,000 from the Suez Canal; but perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will make that clear in the remarks he makes hereafter. I regret to have heard his observations on the subject of the Post Office and the expense of telegrams. To my mind there can be no source more powerful for increasing the business and commerce of the country than by adding to the means which enable people at home and abroad to communicate; and I should have been glad to see some concession made for Colonial postage, such as was asked for some time ago. I think we must all sympathize with the tone of lugubrious warning with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer concluded his speech. The style is not usual with him, and his change from the tones of banter which he used the other night to those of warning is very striking. But I would point out that economy in public expenditure is not to be obtained by warnings; nor is it to be obtained by desisting from enterprizes on which it is considered necessary to embark; but it is to be attained more and more by a vigorous control of the great spending Departments of the country. The question of the revision of the Estimates, by which I believe great economies may be effected, should, in my opinion, be relegated for investigation to a Standing Committee, which could examine the Estimates more thoroughly than is possible in this House. In conclusion, I apologize to the Committee for the time I have occupied, and I trust that I have not wearied hon. Members by the somewhat discursive observations which I have felt it my duty to make.

Colonel BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I wish to urge upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the expenditure upon the Army and Navy should be decided each year by its incidence per head of the population. The right hon. Gentleman referred in his speech to the year 1828-9, when the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel were in the same Cabinet, and when there was an exceptionally low expenditure. For the Army it was about £10,000,000, the population being then 22,000,000 instead of 36,000,000 as at the present time. The pay of the troops and the cost of all munitions of war have gone up enormously since then; but I venture to believe that in the last decade of this century—when the population may be expected to be double what it was in 1828-9—the expenditure will not be found to be in proportion to the increase of population—that is to say, that it will not have doubled. We must not suppose that the Duke of Wellington was satisfied with the expenditure of 1828-9; on the contrary, we learn, from a letter written just before his death, that it cannot be regarded as the measure of the amount he wanted, but as of what he could get. In September, 1883, when the present Secretary of State for the Home Department was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he calculated the incidence per head in 1870, and he took credit for saving 2*s.* 11*d.* per head; and he contended that, although expenditure on Education and other Civil Services had increased, yet the expenditure on the Army and Navy, if calculated at per head of the population, had decreased. What I want the Chancellor of the Exchequer to do is—to insure that every year the expenditure per head on the Army and Navy shall be known to the Committee, because I am convinced the expenditure does not keep pace with the population and wealth of the country.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): I have reason to thank the Committee for the indulgent manner in which they have on the whole treated the Budget which I have had the honour to bring before them. With regard to the observations made from the Front Bench opposite, I do not know that I have anything to say except upon the doubts which were expressed as to whether the Estimates of Revenue were not too sanguine. In this matter I do not rest solely upon my own judgment, but upon information given me by gentlemen of great experience, who are very seldom mistaken in their estimates. It will be observed that we estimate a considerable fall in the duty of spirits from abroad, which is about compensated for by the increased consumption of home-manufactured spirits. That increase might surprise some people in view of the large decrease in the past year, but it is founded on the belief that the stocks are now extremely low. No doubt, as the hon. Member for Whitechapel (Mr. Montagu), who is a great authority, has pointed out, the condition of the gold coinage is very unsatisfactory; but he also knows that the sum of money requisite to place the coin on a proper footing is very large. I can assure the hon. Member that it is not a matter which escapes the attention of the Treasury. Reference has been made to the high rate of the Income Tax. Well, I think that the rate is very high; I think it has been oppressive; but I point out also that the addition of 6*d.* to the tax since 1875-6 is due solely to the amount of the Expenditure. There was a Roman maxim—*Magnum est vectigal parsimonia*—which I recommend to the consideration of the Committee. The growth of the Expenditure of the country is mainly due to the classes by whom the Income Tax is paid, and it may be doubted whether the classes below the payers of the tax are as anxious for this perpetual growth of Expenditure as are the class upon whom the burthen of the Income Tax falls. But the payers of the Income Tax have the remedy in their own hands; and if they will put their shoulders to the wheel they will always find that the Government of the day would be their humble servants. As soon as from the Income Tax paying classes there comes a demand for a reduction of Expenditure, that reduction of Expenditure will take place, and the Income Tax will be reduced, and not before. Now, the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just sat down has asked me to compare the growth of Expenditure with the growth of population. I think he will find that in most years, especially in the last two years, the increase of Expenditure has been in a far higher ratio than that of the population.

COLONEL BLUNDELL: I refer only to normal Expenditure.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I say that the increase of £4,500,000 is on the normal Expenditure as compared with the normal Expenditure of two years ago.

COLONEL BLUNDELL: I say that that would not appear if you go back to 1870. If you take the longer period, from 1870 to 1883, you will find it is exactly the reverse.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: That is true; but that is what I say. Unfortunately, the expenditure on the Army and the Navy is going on, not in arithmetical, but in geometrical progression, and with the sort of accelerated velocity like that of a falling body—and each successive stage becomes more and more rapid—and it is in that view that I have ventured to enter my protest against it to-night. Now, my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcudbright (Mr. Mark Stewart) said something about the Post Office. I should be extremely glad if we were in a position to dispense with the profits derived from the management of the Post Office, and to allow it to be merely a Public Department which brings in no profit. But we cannot afford to do that, because, if I am to lose a revenue of £2,500,000 on the Post Office, I must get it from some other place. Therefore, if the hon. Gentleman has his will, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer gives up the profits from the Post Office, he will have to add 1½*d.* in the pound more to the Income Tax. For that reason I would strongly advise the hon. Member—because he cannot desire that either for himself or his clients—not to urge that the Post Office revenue should be destroyed. I know the West Highlands, I believe, as well as the hon. Member for Kirkcudbright, and though that part of the country has many wants, deficiency in telegraphs is not one of them. It is a most extraordinary thing that at almost every village, and even small hamlets of only half-a-dozen cottages, in the West Highlands, you can find convenience for telegraphing. In fact, the West Highlands, in the remote parts, and in the smallest places, are far better supplied in this respect than any corresponding places in England. The hon. Member must not, however, understand me to deprecate this expenditure, because I believe it is of immense value, and ought to be incurred. Then the hon. Member said something about drovers' dogs. I have great sympathy with drovers and their dogs, and I promise the hon. Member that the matter shall be very carefully examined. If I can do anything for the drover's dog, without extending exemptions too far, and without interfering too much with the Revenue, I promise that I will do so. I listened to the instructive speech of the hon. Member for Paddington (Mr. Lionel Cohen), and I will undertake to give a careful consideration to the subject of his remarks. The small Stamp Duty on Debenture Stock, as compared with ordinary Stock, seems to me to be very deserving of attention, and if I can see my way to get at Debenture Stock, I promise that I will do so. The hon. Member also made some remarks in regard to the Income Tax which involve the localization of that tax. That matter was very carefully considered by my Predecessor in Office, and I have also paid it considerable attention; but the result of our inquiries leads us to the belief that the difficulties are practically so great in respect of the places in which the income is to be found that the localization of the Income Tax appears an almost insoluable question. And that is the conclusion at which, I think, all those who have carefully studied this somewhat complicated question have arrived.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I feel that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not been supported in his appeal for broad economy as he ought to have been. The criticisms on the right hon. Gentleman's speech are, in the main, of a very perfunctory character. He has to provide Ways and Means, and it is impossible for him to regulate taxes so as to please all classes in the country. Ever since I have been in this House, on both sides of the House, somebody has always come forward with a varity of small matters on which trivial reductions could be effected; but I think that we ought to take a much broader view on these occasions of the financial policy of the country. We have been reminded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the large increase in our Expenditure is due to the increasing demands of the two great fighting Departments. Of course it is necessary that we should arm ourselves, and that we must bear the burdens; but I will make this appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that as the demand for these fighting Departments come from those who pay the Income Tax, they should not be the means of imposing such heavy burdens upon the poorer taxpayers of the country. At a time when the country is altogether unable to bear all its burdens, this House, which is responsible for public policy, seems to have determined to place exceptional burdens on the people. I am very glad, however, that the right hon. Gentleman has disregarded the necessity for reducing the National Debt equally in times of depression as in good years. In times of depression the people ought not to be asked to bear an extra burden to reduce the National Debt, for this is a burden which the people ought not to be asked to bear when the distress is so protracted as to be almost normal. I venture to submit to the Committee that the duty rests on the House of Commons, as representing the masses of the people, to vigilantly and diligently look at the expenditure of the two great spending Departments. The time seems to have come when the voices of those who advocate economy in Committee are altogether drowned by the voices of those who represent the Army and Navy; and it is only when we have to pay the piper—when the Budget is introduced—that the voices of the economists are listened to. I earnestly hope that the right hon. Gentleman will resist the appeal which has too frequently been successively made by the Military and Naval Members of this House upon the Public Income of the country. I confess that knowing something of the state of trade in the North of England, and bearing in mind the depression which has existed—a whole decade almost—since 1875, I consider that the burdens the people submit to are intolerable burdens. I believe also that they will not submit very much longer, and that this House will shortly hear this in an especial and unmistakable form. In my judgment, these small questions of mere cheeseparing do not go to the root of the matter; and I think that they exhibit the House of Commons in a way in which it ought not by any means be exhibited before the people. It is perfectly clear that new sources of Revenue are small and very few, and are difficult to find; but I, for one, shall be delighted to find a decrease in the revenue from the tax on intoxicating liquors through a decrease in the drinking habits of the people. I am sure that would not involve a loss, but it would be a saving in every way. We should get it back in our local rates, our prison rates, and our hospital and asylum rates. I earnestly trust that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will persevere even against his own Friends in the spending Departments, and insist that there is a growing demand for a reduction of Expenditure, and that substantial relief shall be given to the country. I hope the military fever from which we have been suffering for the last few years will now be allowed to abate, and that we shall shortly return to a more normal condition of affairs.

Mr. J. WILSON (Edinburgh, Central): Considering that we have only a Budget once a year, I think that we ought not to be grudged one night at least for the expression of opinion on this most important subject. We have heard a good deal to-night from both sides of the House as to the duty of Members to support economy; but, in spite of the recognition of that duty, somehow Budget after Budget comes out with as large or larger an Expenditure than ever. It seems to me that whatever Party is in power we shall still have this enormous Expenditure of something approaching £90,000,000. I believe, however, that the time is coming when the Liberal Party in this House will have to alter its lines and support the country on a different basis, and I hope that basis will be one of sound and true economy; and I am quite sure that whichever side of the House takes the first step in that direction will receive the support of the country. I entirely agree with the hon. Member who spoke last (Mr. Illingworth), that we have to-night gone into trivial questions affecting Expenditure, instead of attempting to get at the root of the evil. Some time ago I called attention to the growth of the Estimates, and I expressed an opinion that this House was not the tribunal to deal with these Estimates in detail; and I ventured to express the opinion that until we had a Finance Committee to deal with the matter we should never have that cutting down of Expenditure which the country demands. The debate of this evening has convinced me that that opinion is well-founded, and I believe that year by year the necessity for such a Committee will become more and more apparent. I must congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer on his lucid and able Statement; but I think that his Estimate of Income for the year is rather too rosy. I am conversant with the condition of almost every department of commercial life, and it is my experience, in dealing with business men throughout the country, that there is not one department of national industry in the country which is at this moment in a flourishing condition. Although the Income Tax has hitherto yielded satisfactory returns, I do not believe that that will continue. I know, from actual knowledge of the fact, that many commercial men return their income on an average of three years, so that it is not until after two or three years that a time of depression tells on the revenue from Income Tax in a strong and stringent manner. Some people do not like to show that their business is falling off, and they return their income at the old figure, in the hope that business will improve. In my own circle of business there have been several bankruptcies of late, in which it was found that the bankrupts had gone on paying Income Tax at the same rate as they did five or six years ago, although they were in such a bad state as to have to become bankrupt. I do not believe, however, they will continue to do this much longer, and the result will be a serious diminution in the return from that source. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has attributed the diminished return from dried fruits to the failure of the crop; but the true reason is chiefly to be found in the competition of France. With regard to fresh sources of Revenue, a legal friend of mine suggested the other day a source from which the Chancellor of the Exchequer might get some additional money. It is very well known that a large number of important legal deeds are not stamped when drawn and signed, and a considerable sum of money may very properly and honestly be obtained by providing that no legal deed shall be valid unless it is stamped at the time when it is signed. I hope that the Committee will bear in mind that the country desires economy, and that they will endeavour to practise it.

Sir JOHN GORST (Chatham): As the hon. Member for West Bradford (Mr. Illingworth) thought fit to treat the Committee to a supplementary lecture on the subject of economy, perhaps I may be allowed to make a few remarks upon the subject. I think the Committee will quite understand the reason which induced the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give us a lecture on the question of economy, and that in making a general statement in regard to finance he found it necessary in order to eke out his speech. I do not know, however, that such statements are of any great public value. Merely to tell people that they were to be economical, that there had been an immense growth of Expenditure, and to exhort Members of the House to put their shoulders to the wheel, and general phrases of that sort, do not generally tend much to a change in the flow of Expenditure. The right hon. Gentleman exhibited himself as a sort of financial Joseph Surface, giving expression to sentiments of financial virtue without telling us in what way we can economize. What the Committee would have liked to hear from the right hon. Gentleman was in what items of Expenditure economy might have been effected. From what the right hon. Gentleman had said, one would have supposed that the Army and Navy Estimates had been brought into the House by some hostile Power, and not made by the Government of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer is a Member, and on his responsibility and authority, but by some power over which he has a very imperfect control. I think it is not out of place to remind the Committee that these Naval and Military Budgets, which formed the subject of his animadversion, were Budgets which, both this year and last year, were brought in by the right hon. Gentleman's own Colleagues, and that he must have given his sanction to them. May I recommend, very humbly, that Ministers of the Crown in future, instead of coming down to the House and merely expressing general views of the advantage of economy, should address themselves to their own Estimates, and if they are extravagant and more than the needs of the country require, that they will themselves be good enough to cut them down. It is, no doubt, true that the expenditure upon the Army and Navy has increased; but if that expenditure is a useless one, who is more to blame for it, and who is more deserving of censure respecting it, than the Members of the Government, who alone have the control of it, and who, if the expenditure can be cut down, ought to cut it down? I really think that, after the speech of the hon. Member for West Bradford (Mr. Illingworth), the Committee will forgive me for rising to remind them, in a few words, that all that has been found fault with by the Chancellor of the Exchequer is the action of his own Colleagues. If any people are to blame for the excessive Naval and Military Expenditure, they are the present and late Colleagues of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. MAGNIAC (Bedford, N., Biggleswade): The hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir John Gorst) complained that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not indicate the particular Department in which saving might be effected. It struck me the right hon. Gentleman indicated that in the most striking manner possible. Then the hon. and learned Gentleman asked why the Government did not endeavour to cut down the Expenditure? If I remember aright, a discovery was made of what was called the Admiralty scandal. Well, all Governments are responsible for this scandal; but there is one power greater than any Government which is still more responsible than the Government, and that is this House of Commons. There is no question that a rage for Military Expenditure took possession of this House some time ago. Hon. Members were carried away by excitement or by the impulse given by the fighting in Egypt and other parts of the world. Hon. and gallant Members of the House persuaded their Friends that we were not spending enough on the Army and the Navy. The consequence is that we have got at the present moment an expenditure in excess, I believe, of anything known in the history of this country, except in the case of a great European war. It is perfectly horrifying to read the Returns which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary (Mr. Childers) moved for and obtained a year or two ago, showing how the Military Expenditure has gradually grown to £31,000,000 sterling. Besides, I believe there is a very general opinion that this country does not get value for the £31,000,000 sterling spent upon its Army and Navy. If we compare this expenditure with the expenditure of any European country, we find that we have had nothing like what those countries have, even making allowance for any consideration you choose to name. There is a general belief that the Military and Naval Departments are absolutely rotten so far as the expenditure of money is concerned, and that they require, as an hon. Member has just said, to be overhauled by a Committee of the House. As regards the finances of the country, I cannot help thinking they are deserving of the most serious consideration of the House, because there is no question that the financial and political horizons are very dark indeed. We have got liabilities in front of us which have not been alluded to in this debate; and I am rather surprised the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in speaking of economy, did not at least refer to one or two of them. There is one tremendous liability looming—some Gentleman will say in the distance, other Gentlemen will say very near—and that is the liability which we shall have to incur in respect to Ireland. I confess I was alarmed and frightened to hear one sentence in the speech which the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister made the other night. The right hon. Gentleman, in asking leave to introduce the Bill for the better government of Ireland, said—

> "In a case of this kind, after all that has occurred, when two countries are very strong and very rich, compared with a third of far more restricted means, the pecuniary arrangements ought to be equitable and even bountiful in some moderate degree."

[*A cheer.*] Now, I do not in the least object to that cheer; but I merely wish to point out the absolute fact. We know what it means when it comes to England being not only generous but bountiful—we know we shall have to appeal in a very large degree to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have endeavoured to make out, on paper, what our future extraordinary expenditure in respect of Ireland will be. On the most cursory examination it will be found to be £1,000,000 sterling, but probably £2,000,000 more will have to be added to it in the long run. We have with which to defray that extraordinary expenditure a surplus of £500,000, a surplus which should be devoted, and which is devoted by law, to another object—namely, the reduction of the Debt. To restore our finances there are only two ways, and two only—the one is a reduction of our expenditure in the great fighting Departments, which I hope will take place, and the other is the extension of our trade. The conclusion of the Spanish Treaty, for instance, is yet in abeyance. At the present moment Spain is consuming from £7,000,000 to £8,000,000 worth of European goods which ought to be supplied by us. I am sorry to find that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not indicate any probability of being able to effect an alteration of the Wine Duties in connection with that country. I hope that is something which is in store for us, and that we may before long see Spain again open to British trade. At the present moment Spain is absolutely shut to us; and to my knowledge there are goods in the shape of German raw spirit, to the value of millions sterling, sent to Spain and then forwarded to

England. This is done for the purpose of fostering the trade between Spain and Germany, and the British taxpayers are required to pay the piper. Then we have before us an immediate liability in respect to the currency. Everyone will admit that the gold currency of the country is in a most disgraceful condition. I believe that to put it to rights an expenditure of from £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 sterling will be required. It is too late to-night to go into details; but I hope the consideration of these matters will induce the House to practise that economy of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke; because, after all, it is only by economy that we can get out of the difficulties in which we now find ourselves. I hope that, if it is possible, we shall practise economy in the two fighting Departments. The House would do well to insist upon a searching inquiry, with a view of ascertaining whether we are getting value for our money. At present I very much doubt that we are.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): I must, in the first place, thank the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the very lucid exposition of the finances he has given us to-night. I have had the good fortune to listen to many Budget Statements, but I do not recollect any occasion on which the state of the finances of the country was more lucidly put before the House. Sir, my hon. Friend the Member for North Bedford (Mr. Magniac) has alluded, with the great authority which deservedly belongs to him, to several questions. He has, for instance, made a great point of the necessity of economy. Well, Sir, we are all for economy. The right hon. Gentleman in different portions of his speech, but particularly in the concluding portion of it, spoke very strongly about the necessity for economy. He referred to the fact that the Army and Navy Estimates have very largely increased of late years. We should all be very glad if these Estimates could be cut down; but the Committee must bear in mind that the salaries of the upper classes and the wages of the lower classes are very much higher than they were a quarter of a century ago, and that it is quite impossible, under these circumstances, that our expenses should not increase. We cannot expect gentlemen to serve in the Army as officers at the scale of pay which was appropriate in the days when Wellington fought in the Peninsula. ["They do!"] It has always struck me that every man, with two exceptions, who serves Her Majesty—from the Prime Minister down to the humblest Post Office messenger—is underpaid. The two exceptions are the Law Officers of the Crown. I believe they are very handsomely remunerated. I see the late Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) shakes his head; but I am not referring to the Lord Advocate of Scotland, but to the Attorney and Solicitor Generals of England. I do not believe the Lord Advocate is at all overpaid, and that remark applies equally to the present Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) as to my right hon. and learned Friend (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald). Well, I do not think we can reduce the salaries of the officers of the Army, or the pay of the men. Then, when we turn to the Navy, I cannot but feel that there is a very general feeling in the country that the Navy should be kept up at its full strength, and rather increased then otherwise. I had the honour some 12 months ago of presiding at a meeting in the City of London which was addressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Strand Division of Westminster (Mr. W. H. Smith) and by another right hon. Friend of mine—the late Mr. Forster—and this was certainly their opinion. Mr. Forster was my oldest Friend in this House, and I venture to take this opportunity of paying my humble tribute to the memory of one who, by his great abilities, and by his devotion to the Public Service, earned for himself the respect of all Members of the House, and of all men who love their country. I think, Sir, that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cardiff (Sir Edward J. Reed) shares the belief that the Navy must be maintained at its full strength, and that we ought to be prepared to increase the Navy Estimates, if necessary. I certainly do not see any reasonable hope of cutting down the expenditure on the Army, and I think that it is very possible that the expenditure on the Navy will have to be increased. As regards the Civil Service, I do not hold with the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), who, I believe, has given Notice of a Motion to reduce certain salaries, including that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That is a Motion against which I shall with great cordiality give my vote. It is quite right the right hon. Gentleman should appeal to the House to practise economy. Every hon. Member must feel that economy is a most desirable thing; but there are limits even to economy, as the Government may find. I am very anxious to see the Debt reduced; yet, under the circumstances in which we are placed—in the present commercial and agricultural depression—I think the right hon. Gentleman has taken the right course in the measures which he has suggested to the Committee.

Motion *agreed to.*

(1.) *Resolved*, That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, the Duties of Customs now chargeable upon Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say): on

Tea . . . the pound . Sixpence.

(2.) *Resolved*, That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Eight Pence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—

In England, the Duty of Four Pence;
In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Three Pence;

Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, and in section eight of "The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876," for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds.

(3.) *Resolved*, That it is expedient to amend the Laws relating to the Inland Revenue and Customs.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow.*

Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 118.] COMMITTEE.

[*Progress 5th April.*]

[FIFTH NIGHT.]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 13 (Available land).

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Mr. Courtney, I beg, Sir, without any remarks, to move the Amendment which I believe my right hon. Friend the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) was in the act of moving when the Sitting was suspended the other day.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 8, to leave out from the word "Act," to the word "it," in line 10.—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not propose to review in any detail the arguments on this subject, but simply to say that while we have thought fit to make a reservation in the case of lands held under existing leases for agricultural or pastoral purposes, we considered that when it comes to an assignment of land necessary for the occupation of the inhabitants close by, a lease for deer forest purposes should not stand in the way. We think that this is a reasonable exception, and that reservation which may be appropriate in the case of arable land, and even land let for pastoral farms, is not appropriate in the case of a great tract of country let for merely sporting purposes, and out of which a portion may be assigned for agricultural purposes.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I should like, before we go to a division upon this Amendment, to ask my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate one question. I am not going to enter into an argument as to whether it is equitable suddenly to throw upon persons in this country an absolute breaking up of contracts into which they have entered, and contracts under which they may have expended, and certainly have expended, very large sums of money. It is quite obvious that by this clause the interests of those who have taken land as a deer forest must necessarily be seriously affected; and I want to know from the Lord Advocate whether he contemplates that, under this Bill, the fact being that large slices of a deer forest may be cut out, and that the express purposes for which it was let may practically be at an end, the tenant is to be free from his contract or not, and, if he is to be free from his contract, whether the landlord is to receive any compensation? It seems to me it would be a most extraordinary thing if a contract is to be broken up, and land, which has been let for 19 years two years ago, is to be completely destroyed for the purposes for which it was let, and no compensation given to the landlord.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I would refer my right hon. and learned Friend to page 15 of the Amendments, on which we have placed a proposal as to how the interests of the tenant is to be dealt with, and as regards the interests of the landlord. I have only to repeat that our view is this—that, while we think it is quite proper not to interfere with the letting of parts of the country where there is no competition for the reasonable use of land for the purposes of deer forests, when we come to a part of the country which is needful for the use of the inhabitants, it is not—although it may be in law a legal contract—a legitimate contract in a larger sense. Interference, therefore, with such a contract, would not only be admissible, but proper, though it would not be admissible or proper in another case.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I am astonished at the doctrine just laid down by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate. He draws a distinction between contracts which, he says, are legal, and which ought to be kept, and contracts which, though legal, are in the larger spirit of legislation such that ought not to be kept. Now, what are these contracts which the Lord Advocate says we ought not to keep? They are contracts allowed by the Legislature from time immemorial. They are contracts under which hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent by the tenants, and I am utterly at a loss to understand—if the principle of legislation laid down by the right hon. and learned Gentleman is accepted—what possible security any man can henceforth have when he enters into a contract with another man, and how it will be possible for any one of Her Majesty's subjects to expend money on the strength of a contract made with some other party, with any assured prospect that he will be allowed to reap the benefit. Is there anything so monstrous in a deer forest which calls for this strange exceptional treatment? ["Yes!"] From what point of view? The Lord Advocate must be perfectly well aware, that if deer forests are destroyed by the operation of this Bill, the result will be that the food supply of the country will not be increased, but diminished. Are hon. Members so ignorant of the way in which sheep farming is at present conducted on high ground, as not to know that if they destroy the deer forests they will not be able to let the land to the crofters, either for sheep-farming, or any other purpose? If the land now occupied by deer—and it does provide food now to a certain extent—[*A laugh*]—I do not know if hon. Members opposite ever ate venison—if they destroy the deer forests, the land cannot be turned to any other purpose. That is the only proper use to which a great deal of the land of the Highlands can be devoted; and, beyond that, deer forests actually employ a much larger number of men than sheep-farms, and give them higher wages. Thus the poor will materially suffer, if deer forests are abolished; and I am at a loss to understand, therefore, why, according to hon. Gentlemen opposite, they are not only to be discouraged, but are to be done away with as far as possible, and are beneath the care of legislation. I suppose the real objection is that deer forests are a luxury, enjoyed chiefly, if not entirely, by the rich. I believe that is really at the bottom of the whole thing. But, then, I want to know why this principle should be applied to deer forests, and not to other industries?

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): They are not an industry.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: They are as much an industry as are sheep farms. I admit that they are a luxury; but does that make them any the less an industry? The same argument would apply to all industries which produced luxuries; and in some places whole towns exist for the production of luxuries. But the real test of an industry is the effect which it produces on those engaged in it, and I say that deer forests are far better industries for the Highlands than the sheep farms. Every man with even the most rudimentary acquaintance with the Highlands knows that to destroy deer forests will, indeed, be an injury; but it will be a far greater injury to the poor, and I venture to say that you who deny that show a radical ignorance of life in the Higlands.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I did hope that we were going to make progress with this Bill to-night, and therefore I did not reply to the right hon. and learned Gentleman who spoke before; but the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has challenged a reply. Well, I am able to speak from careful personal examination on this matter, because some years ago I examined into the subject very fully—not through the information of gamekeepers or gillies, but from personal observation, and I published a letter on the subject. I found that, whether as regards the money return, the population, or the food, the conversion of deer forests into sheep farms would give a double return. ["Oh, oh!"] Well, it is a question of strong assertion on either side; but I am prepared to prove what I have said before a Committee, if such is appointed. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of deer forests as an industry. I always understood that an industry was that which produced something. What does a deer forest produce?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: A luxury.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY: What luxury does it produce?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Has the hon. Member never shot deer?

MR. J. W. BARCLAY: It is purely and essentially a destructive business. Deer forests banish the population, and everybody who has travelled through the Highlands and has seen the ruined houses of the former inhabitants will say so. It demoralizes the people by bringing up the young men as gillies—idle, loafing fellows—not at all the kind of people we want to have in Scotland. The people of Scotland generally look upon deer forests as a curse to the country. Deer-stalking in its proper aspect is not incompatible with the existence of sheep farms and grouse moors; but deer forests for the indiscriminate slaughter of deer—where the deer serve merely as targets—ought to be condemned as contrary to the public good. I assure hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite that a very strong feeling is growing up in Scotland on this subject; and I believe that, unless some change is agreed to, it will necessarily lead to a demand for the total abolition of the Game Laws. I have always been in favour of a moderate preservation of game; but at the last General Election I was made aware of a very strong feeling in favour of the total abolition of deer forests. The existence of deer forests depends wholly upon the Game Laws, and they would be worth nothing were those laws abolished; and that is within the competence of Parliament. I warn hon. Members opposite who may have an interest in deer forests, that unless they give the people some remedy for the grievances of which they complain they will find themselves face to face with a determined movement for the total abolition of the Game Laws.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I am glad that the hon. Member who has just spoken (Mr. J. W. Barclay) replied to my right hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Balfour), because I do think that this is a matter of great importance to the Highlands. He says that there is a great feeling growing up against these deer forests, and that we are ignorant of it. Well, I differ from him altogether on that point. We are aware that much prejudice exists in Scotland against deer forests; but we know that that prejudice is based upon much misapprehension, complete misunderstanding, and total ignorance of the whole question. The hon. Member began by making an assertion which I am able to contradict on the authority of the Royal Commission. He stated that he was able to prove that sheep farms produced a return of food double as much as that which is produced by deer forests. Well, I cannot enter into details; but, according to the Report of the Royal Commission which has just been issued, the difference is "absolutely infinitesimal"—that is the expression of the Commissioners themselves—and that "it is not worthy of consideration." The food argument of the hon. Gentleman, therefore, falls to the ground. Then as to the Committee of 1872, the hon. Member has said he thinks its opinion was not worth anything, because, he said, it was composed of landlords and game preservers. I do not think that is a respectful way of referring to a Committee appointed by the unanimous voice of this House; but I am not surprised at the statement, because the hon. Member gave evidence before that Committee, and the statements he made were of so absurd and contradictory a character that he was knocked into a "cocked hat" altogether. Well, the hon. Member wants to know what deer forests produce. Well, they produce a good many deer in parts of the Highlands which will produce nothing else besides deer, and they also introduce an immense amount of wealth, an immense amount of employment, and an immense amount of capital into the country. They produce, moreover, a large wage fund for distribution among the native population in addition to the revenue accruing from deer forests in the Highlands. Then the hon. Member says they abolish the population. There never was a statement more contrary to the fact. How does he prove that? By pointing to the traces of human habitations of former days. I acknowledge that such traces exist; but these habitations were not abolished for deer forests. They were abolished in order to make room for sheep farms, of which the hon. Member has posed as the foremost and most consistent supporter ever since he has been in this House. Well, there is further evidence bearing on this point in the Report of the Royal Commission. The Gentlemen composing the Committee inquired very carefully for over a year on this point; and what do they tell us? They say that they only found one single case in which it had been shown that human habitations and crofters' holdings had been destroyed for the purpose of making a deer forest, and that occurred at least 30 years ago, and that in each case where crofters were removed provision was made for them elsewhere. Then the hon. Member says that deer forests demoralize the people. Is it to be said, then, in this House of Commons, that sport in itself is demoralizing? I never heard a more absurd, a more ludicrous, or a more un-English statement in the whole course of my life. Well, he was asked why they were demoralizing, and he said that the men were able to get higher wages during three months of the year. Then, because the people are able to get higher wages during three months of the year, that is demoralizing. I do not think that will commend itself to the people of the Highlands, and I should like to hear what the wage-earners of that part of the country say to a statement like that? Then he said that deer forests were not incompatible with sheep farming.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: I said "with deer stalking."

Mr. CHAPLIN: With deer stalking? Well, I admit that is different; but I can tell the hon. Member that deer stalking, under those circumstances, would amount to this—that you would only get the sport perhaps once or twice, or, at the most, three or four times, in the course of the season; and I hardly think that would be sufficient inducement for people to invest their money in deer forests, and to visit the Highlands. Then the hon. Member went on to talk of deer stalking resulting in the indiscriminate slaughter of deer. Well, I do not know what the experience of the hon. Member is, but he must have been remarkably fortunate. If the hon. Gentleman has often indulged in that pursuit I think he will know that, so far from indiscriminate slaughter occuring, he may consider himself a very fornate, and not only a very fortunate, but also a very skilful sportsman, if, after 10 or 12 or 14 hours' hard work in the course of the day, he succeeds in bringing home a single good head. I turn from the hon. Member, whose observations were, perhaps, hardly worth notice, to some remarks which fell from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate at the commencement of his observations; and what he said was this, that the principle upon which the Government had embarked was that there was land which might be needful for purposes of grazing, and which they wished to retain powers within this Bill to take, and that, at the same time, there were large districts which were useful for no other purposes than those of maintaining deer. But I find nothing whatever in the Bill which will impose upon the Commissioners the necessity of drawing any distinction whatever between these two classes of land. On the contrary, my complaint has been this—that, according to the way in which the Bill is drawn, there is not one single forest within any one of the five counties named in the measure which will not come within the operation of its provisions. Well, Sir, what will be the result of that?—and I do think these are matters to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, on the part of the Government, may well give his serious attention, and offer some observations in answer to hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House. If you interfere with all these forests, as you will interfere with them if the Bill is made use of—if its provisions are put into operation—the first result will be that every shooting lease in Scotland will be broken and interfered with, and at once thrown upon the landlord's hands. I say, if that occurs, or if anything approaching to it occurs, you will be inflicting on that part of the Highlands the greatest mischief and injury that it is possible for you to inflict. The Committee, I hope, before these discussions are ended, will understand, however much they may be prejudiced against the system of deer forests, that there are immense tracts in the Highlands that may be devoted to that purpose with use and advantage to the community, and which can be devoted to no other purpose whatsoever. What I am afraid of is that if you insist upon this Bill in its present form, and refuse to allow to us the reasonable concession we ask, and which we honestly ask for only in what we believe to be the interests of the Highlands themselves, you will, instead of conferring a benefit, be doing the greatest injury in the world to that part of Scotland. I do not wish to delay the Committee; but before I sit down will hon. Members allow me to put before them just one instance that has come under my own personal observation, and which, I think, will go far to convince them of the truth of what I have been saying on this subject? It so happens that some eight or ten years ago a certain district in the Northern Highlands—[*Cries of* "Name!"]—it was in the county of Sutherland; I need not publicly mention the names of the individuals concerned, though I should be ready to give them in private to any hon. Member who wishes to know them—I say a certain district that had for years before been devoted to sheep farming became vacant. How did it become vacant? Why, it became vacant because, for two or three years in succession, the winters had been so severe, the frost so prolonged, and the snow so deep, that the sheep died in enormous numbers. What deer there were on the ground died in great quantities too. The sheep farmer, being nearly ruined by his loss, declined to go on with the farm on any terms, and in that way the whole of the district was without a tenant, It was a part of the country in which the wildest enthusiast in the cause of the crofters could not imagine it to be within the competence of anyone to establish a settlement of crofters within it. Well, an individual came forward and said—"As there is nothing else to be done with it, I am ready to take the sheep lease off the sheep farmer's hands provided I may clear it of sheep and convert it into a deer forest." This was done, and what was the result? Thousands of pounds of capital were spent on the place. A road was made for 15 miles, paths were cut all over the district, houses were built—keepers houses were constructed in addition—and a resident population—of course, a small one—was established in what otherwise would have been destitute of human beings and human habitations, and from that time to this that district has given large employment to a considerable number of people, not only throughout the sporting season, but throughout many months of the year besides. That is an instance within my own knowledge of what has occurrred; and that is not a solitary instance. What has happened in that case has happened in hundreds of other cases. What I want to impress upon the Committee is this—that if, by your Bill, you arbitrarily put a stop to the enjoyment of deer forests—if you abolish this kind of expenditure in that part of the Highlands for ever—I venture to say you will be doing—what I have said three or four times already—not a benefit, but the greatest injury you can possibly do to the Highlands.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I am not going to take up the time of the Committee with any lengthened comment upon the excited speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. I do not recollect seeing the right hon. Gentleman so excited since that great shock was given to the British Constitution—the passing of the Hares and Rabbits Bill. I wish to say a few words in regard to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour). This is not the first time the right hon. Gentleman has tried to persuade the House that the most beneficent thing that could be done to the Highlands of Scotland would be to convert them into one vast deer forest.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): If what I said is capable of that interpretation, I must have expressed myself very badly. I never even thought of such a thing.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I do not say the right hon. Gentleman used those words. He, however, made the statement, over and over again, that instead of being a loss the deer forests were an immense gain to the Highland people, and that if you were to take away these deer forests you would deprive the people of large incomes. The right hon. Gentleman referred to them as a profitable industry existing in the Highlands of Scotland. Well, I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will answer this question. In all other places where profitable industries exist they are popular with the people, Can that test be applied in the case of deer forests in the Highlands of Scotland? Can the right hon. Gentleman show that the deer forests are popular? If they are, why is this agitation kept up against them? If they are profitable to the people, why is there an agitation against them? Do the people in that part of the world appreciate less than others the advantages derived from monetary expenditure amongst them? Certainly not; but the fact is they do not derive monetary advantage from these deer forests, the advantage being altogether in the possession of the landowners. Not a tithe ever reaches the general population. And I say that the logical conclusion to draw from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman is that the best thing which could be done with the Highlands would be to turn them into a magnificent deer forest. The right hon. Gentleman says deer forests employ more people on the area——

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Than sheep farms.

Mr. MACFARLANE: The right hon. Gentleman always rides off on this—and he is, perhaps, entitled to do so—that the depopulation of the Highlands took place in favour of sheep, and that that depopulation is perpetuated now in favour of deer. The right hon. Gentleman opposite gets very excited about these holdings being matters of contract, and as to the proposal being that the law should interfere and restore to the people the whole of the deer forests. I have no objection to deer forests by themselves where they have not been taken from the people, and where they consist of land not suitable for agricultural tenants. I only object to them where they are in the place of the evicted Highlanders, and where the land is suitable for the people. This Bill proposes to place in the hands of the Commissioners discriminating power to take the land at present forming deer forests for the benefit of the crofters, and I think it a very justifiable thing to confer that power upon the Commissioners.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I do not rise for the purpose of carrying on the discussion, but to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate if he will answer a question put to him. It is a matter of business upon which I put a question to him, and not one of sentiment or discussion of any kind. I want to know this. Under this Bill a tenant is to be obliged to give up certain lands which he possesses under contract. The landlord is to be obliged to accept such modification of rent as the Land Commission may fix in respect of that land—or that, I understand, is the effect of a clause to be afterwards moved. My question—which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has not answered—is this, Is the tenant, or is he not, entitled to say—"You have taken away part of the subject for which I contracted—you have taken away part of that on which I depend for getting my return as a tenant; I propose to give up the holding altogether." Would he not be entitled to do that under this Bill; or does the right hon. and learned Gentleman propose to compel him to hold under his contract, though it is broken under the law? I want to know that, in the first place, as to the tenant; then, if the tenant is not to be obliged to hold on, but may say—"As my contract is broken; as I can no longer have the subject for which I contracted—a part has been taken away—and as I do not care for a piece of it, I will give up the whole," is the landlord, who has entered into the contract with the tenant, in the event of the whole of the land, save that which is taken by the Commissioners, being thrown upon his hands and losing the rent hitherto paid to him—is he to have no compensation?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I should be glad to answer the question without continuing the discussion, which has already gone over three nights. So far as the Bill and the Amendments proposed by the Government at present stand, there is no proposal entitling the tenant absolutely to renounce his lease; because, in our opinion, the Amendment we propose to make in Clause 15 for abatement of rent would meet the case. But if the right hon. and learned Gentleman thinks it desirable that in such a case as he has stated a tenant should have the right to renounce his lease, we will favourably consider the point. [Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: No, no.] Yes. The Bill, as it stands, would not, I think, give that power; but if my right hon. and learned Friend thinks it would be desirable to introduce such a provision, I will consider it favourably. Our anticipation is that in the execution of this Bill there will be no destruction of deer forests in places where they are morally or socially right, and that only in those places where there ought not to be deer forests will the land be reserved for the uses for which it is naturally applicable. With regard to the case of the landlord, the answer is, that he will receive in respect of the land reserved from the deer forest such rent as it is worth.

SIR ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL (Renfrew, W.): I would only detain the Committee for one moment. I should be very sorry, indeed, that it should go forth, at any rate to Scotland, that all on this side are not willing that this Bill should give to the Highlanders all that it can give. I think it would be advantageous if some arrangement could be made by which an existing deer forest, when dealt with under this Bill, should not be cut in two in the centre, but should have the outside portions taken first. In this way the arrangement would be good for all parties; and knowing that the land would all be taken in one way the landlords would have less objection to the thing being done than would otherwise be the case. Deer forests are not made in places where the landlords can get other rents for them. I am sure of that. I do not own them myself; I know nothing about them; but I am satisfied that the landlords would be glad to see their land occupied in the best manner possible. I think that, instead of allowing them to give holdings to crofters in the centre of deer forests which exist at the present moment, some instruction should be given to the Commissioners to begin at the fringe, as it were, without breaking up the whole concern. If that were decided upon, I am convinced that we should arrive at an adequate agreement upon this question.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.):—[*Cries of* "Divide!"] I think, if the Committee will listen to me for two or three moments, I shall be able to say something that may facilitate the harmonious conclusion of this discussion. I can assure hon. Members I have no desire to detain them with any other intention. It seems to me that the replies given by the right hon. Gentlemen below me have been provoked by extreme statements on the other side. I hope hon. Members opposite will observe this—that some of us on this side are desirous of aiding the Government in bringing this Bill to something like a practical conclusion; and I hope, therefore, they will not say that all that comes from us is dictated by selfish considerations. There is, no doubt, a prevailing feeling in favour of extensions of land being given to a certain class of poor agriculturists; and if those extensions can be given, they must be given even on principles that violate the canons of political economy. This Bill from the first—from beginning to end—has certainly attracted much attention; and we are not unwilling that exceptional measures should be taken to improve the condition of the crofters. It seems to me that the case put by my hon. Friend the Member for Renfrewshire (Sir Archibald

Campbell) is met in the Bill, because in the first part of this clause we read—

> "Land shall not be deemed available pasture or grazing land for the purposes of this Act unless it lies contiguous or near to land already in the occupation of a crofter."

It is clear from this that it would be impossible to cut into the middle of a deer forest. Then, again, it is apparent from a statement I have here, put forward by the Protection Association, that only a small number of acres out of the total devoted to deer forests could be taken—that only the foot of the glens running down to the low country would be available for arable land. Only a small portion of the deer forests will be available. If the Land Commission is to be worthy of confidence at all, it is clear that it could not take up the enormous areas of the deer forests and turn them into sheep farms. This statement of the Protection Association points out that the greater portion of the deer forests are quite above the line that is available for grazing; and when hon. Gentlemen talk about land being taken from profitable uses and converted into deer forests, I would point out that it is notorious that pasturage which is useful for deer is not useful for sheep, and that no animal but deer can browse on land that is used for deer forests. If we could come to an agreement on this question I think it would be very valuable. I cannot think that, with the clause proposed by the Lord Advocate, there is very much in this matter at all. It certainly would be a very wrong thing indeed that a contract entered into between two persons according to law should be interfered with without due safeguards. I repeat that what will be done will be to give the crofters extensions at the bottom of the glens—pasturage on the lower slopes—which will not interfere with those great areas which can only be profitably used as deer forests.

Mr. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central): Though I agree to a great extent with the remarks that have fallen from the right hon. Baronet behind me (Sir James Fergusson), I must say it seems to me that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate deals out a different measure to deer forests according to the nature of the argument he has in hand at the moment. When we were on the question of fair rent he declined to introduce words into the Bill to define what a fair rent was, lest an excuse should be given for forcing up the rent, in view of the possibility of higher offers from non-agricultural tents. What he feared, as I understand it, was that competition might arise for land from those who wished to throw it into deer forests—that the owners of deer forests, in order to round off their property, would be prepared to give a very high price for outlying land, much more than its proper agricultural value, to the prejudice of the crofter. That was the view he took of outlying skirts of deer forests in the discussion of the question of fair rent; but now that he is discussing another point it appears that outlying portions of deer forests have no value at all—or next to none—and that large areas now used for deer can be withdrawn without injury to the forests. I should like to know how land can be withdrawn from the outskirts of deer forests without injury to those forests, if it is true that for similar outlying portions proprietors are willing to pay enormous sums far exceeding the agricultural value of the land?

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 197; Noes 98: Majority 99. — (Div. List, No. 72.)

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): Sub-section 3 says—

> "It shall not be competent for the Land Commissioners to assign land for the enlargement of the crofters' holdings—(*a*.) If the land forms part of any garden, policy, park or plantation, or;"

and I desire to omit the word "park." It must be well known to everyone who understands these matters that the word is one of very wide significance. It may mean a park that has no connection with a residence—even a grazing park miles away from the owner's house. I think the word should not be accepted without some qualification.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 18, to leave out the word "park."—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the word proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): No doubt, as the hon. Member says, this word "park," in certain cases, is used with great latitude in Scotland. But I rather think anyone accustomed to construe the words of an Act of Parliament reading this section, and finding this expression in such company as it is here placed, will have no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that it is a park surrounding a residence that is referred to.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

On the Motion of The Lord ADVOCATE, the following Amendments made:—Pape 6, line 18, after "park," leave out "or;" line 19, after "plantation," insert "or other wood."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I beg to move, after line 19, on page 6, to insert—

> "(*b.*) If the land is arable land which is at the date of the application, or has been within seven years prior thereto, under cereal or green crop, or subject to a rotation of cropping."

I think hon. Members who were present when it was decided that arable land should be included within the scope of the Bill will see the necessity for the insertion of these words. At any rate, I will explain it to the Committee. It was understood at the meeting of Scotch Members to be the general view that the terms of the Bill should not preclude the Commission from taking into view and assigning to the enlargement of holdings land capable of being put under the plough. The Amendment includes land that at one time has been under the plough, and which, though not under cultivation now, is capable of being put under it. The object of the proposal is to protect land in the hands of those cultivators pursuing a certain course of cultivation with respect to the land. Hon. Members who are familiar with Scotch agriculture know that the custom in many parts is to place the land under rotation of crops. In this way, at one time, there may be only seven-sixths under the plough; and if the one-sixth not under cultivation were to be taken away it would throw the whole farm out of the course of rotation of cropping. I do not think it would be right to take anything from a farmer who is making the most of his land, so as to destroy the rotation of his cropping. I think the feeling of the Committee will be with my Amendment in this matter.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 6, after line 19, to insert "(*b.*) If the land is arable land which is at the date of the application, or has been within seven years prior thereto, under cereal or green crop, or subject to a rotation of cropping."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I am at a loss to understand what the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate means to do for the crofter at all. By leaving out the words "pasture and grazing," and allowing the word "land" to remain in the clause conferring this boon upon the crofter, he led us to believe that he intended to give land which should be of use to the crofter; but now he aims at making the land really pasture and grazing land by hedging the clause round with all these exemptions. It will be altogether useless to give them land unless a portion of it is arable. The late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) called together the Scotch Members for the purpose of discussing this Bill. He asked for a definition of pasture land, and a definition was given by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Forfar (Mr. J. W. Barclay), and now we find that that is the very land the crofter is not to get. We are having a juggle of words put in the Bill with no meaning attached to them. I repeat it will be useless to give the crofters all grazing and no arable land, for without the latter it will be impossible for him to keep his sheep in the winter. The sheep will die, and the land will be practically useless to the farmer. I have pressed this matter on the attention of the right hon. and learned Gentleman once or twice already. I would ask him to give us some practical reason why this Amendment should be put in. Anyone who knows anything of these matters, any practical agriculturist knows that unless you have arable land to supply your sheep with food you will be unable to keep them, and the rest of your land will be of no use to you, because for several months in the year it will be covered with snow, so as to render it impossible for your sheep to feed on it. I cannot understand what the right hon. and learned Gentleman means by endeavouring to force this on us. I would ask him if he insists on this to strike out the word "land" altogether, so as to give the crofters nothing? Let him either give them no land whatever, or both kinds, because both kinds are required.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): This is a most disappointing measure. If there ever was a case in which the Government gave with one hand and took away with the other it is in this Bill. The right hon. and learned Gentleman will admit that the Scotch Members have expressed a strong feeling that this part of the Bill will be useless unless arable land is given as well as grazing land. [Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: Hear hear!] I understood that the right hon. and learned Gentleman had considered this point, and that he was going to give arable land, because he struck out "pasture and grazing" from the original clause giving land to the crofter. Now, we find that he has put in another clause, the effect of which is that the crofter is not to have arable land or land under cultivation at the date of the application, or which

> "has been within seven years prior thereto, under cereal or green crop, or subject to a rotation of cropping,"

so that even when land has ceased to be arable he may not have it. It seems to me that this takes away the boon which the Lord Advocate was supposed to give to the crofters. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said it would not do to take away from the farmers land required for arable purposes. The Committee will observe that the Bill proposes not to take arable land that is under lease, and now we have this Amendment. It seems to me reasonable that if you are to take grazing land it is desirable to take arable land. I go further, and say that with this Amendment the clause would place the crofter in a worse position than it would have done in the form in which it stood originally. I am inclined to think that if the clause had remained as it originally stood, the crofter would be entitled to have, in the shape of an extension of grazing or pasture land, land which went out of cultivation five or six years ago. Such land would come under the definition of pastoral or grazing land, whereas, under this Amendment, all land cultivated within the past seven years will be excluded. I do hope the Lord Advocate will concede this point. If he does not, the Bill will be absolutely useless.

MR. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): I feel it is a matter for regret that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has not the experience of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) on this subject, otherwise he would, no doubt, be able to afford the Committee valuable enlightenment on these points. It is a great drawback that the measure is in the hands of those who are not practically acquainted with agriculture.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): The hon. Member (Sir George Campbell) who spoke just now seems to forget that the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) laid it down distinctly that arable land was not to be included. At the large meeting of Scotch Members he has referred to this definition was made an exception, so that the Lord Advocate very naturally put it in. The hon. Member seems to forget that if arable land is to be taken as the Land Commissioners may deem desirable, the very essence of the holdings of the farmers may be taken away from them. Their farm buildings without this land would be of no use whatever. It is, therefore, very important to stand by this Amendment of the Lord Advocate.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Before we go to a division upon this Amendment I trust we may have an answer from the Lord Advocate.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): It seems to me that the crofters are not to get any land at all, because it is already provided that no land under lease is to be taken, and now we are going to enact that the crofter is not to have any arable land, whether under lease or not; so that the Bill, so far it professes to give land to the crofters, is a delusion and a sham. I wish, with respect to this Amendment, to call the attention of the Lord Advocate to the last words, which are quite unnecessary, and may create ambiguity, although I do not know that it will be of much consequence, as the Bill will be of extremely little value. The words I refer to are "under cereal or green crop." If the land has not been under cereal or green crop for seven years, of course it is not "subject to a rotation of cropping." It is unnecessary, after having excluded land which may not have been cultivated for nearly seven years, to speak of "rotation of cropping." If the Amendment is pressed, I should move to leave out the words "under cereal or green crop, or subject to a rotation of cropping."

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, to leave out the words "under cereal or green crop, or subject to a rotation of cropping."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment."

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: If my Amendment is accepted, I shall be quite willing to agree to the proposed modification. I may say that my understanding of the prevalent feeling on the part of Scotch Members at the meeting to which reference has been made was that this Amendment embodies their idea. It was entirely in deference to them that I put this Amendment on the Paper; and if I have reason now to believe that it is not their prevalent feeling I shall not press it. Probably, the difficulty I have sought to meet will be met by lines 23 and 24 of this clause—namely, "without material damage to the letting value of the remainder." I felt it my duty to endeavour to interpret the feeling of Scotch Members on this matter; but if I have misunderstood it I am exceedingly sorry, and will not press the Amendment.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I do not think the right hon. and learned Gentleman has at all mistaken the intention of the Scotch Members. I do not think this Amendment would diminish the amount of land that the crofter would get, because I am inclined to think that there are few cases in the Highlands where land is under a rotation of cropping in which the abstraction of a piece from a farm would not do "material damage to the letting value of the remainder." I think the case the right hon. and learned Gentleman has in view is already met by the 3rd section of the clause. Let me point out an objecjection in principle to this Amendment. The Bill purports to give to the crofter on lease land which he once held in occupation; but if you pass this Amendment you will do much more—you will give over to the crofter the improvements and the capital of somebody else. All this improved land is land on which a great deal of money has been spent in draining, trenching, fencing, and so on; and to give not only the land, but all the capital that has been sunk upon it, to the crofter, appears to be a great innovation in the Bill.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): It seems to me the right hon. Gentleman rather begs the question, because we have been accustomed to hold that a great deal of the arable land has been reclaimed from the bog and the mountain by the labour of the small farmer and crofter. There are many cases in which anyone travelling through the Highlands can see that land now under the plough of the farmer was once under the plough of the crofter. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate says that upon this question he is willing to accept the sense of the Scotch Members. I think that the greater part of the Scotch Members who were present at the meeting which has been spoken of will bear me out when I say that we did not accept the view that arable land is land which has been under cultivation within seven years.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I do not press the Amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman ask leave to withdraw the Amendment?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: Yes; I ask leave to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Gentleman the Member for Forfar ask leave to withdraw his Amendment to the proposed Amendment?

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: Yes.

Amendment to the said proposed Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 28, after the word "is," to insert the words "arable or."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to*.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): So far as I myself was responsible for any of that heat which hon. Members opposite seemed to think marked the debate upon the last Amendment which came from this Bench I beg to offer my apologies to the Committee. I rise to submit another Amendment—namely, after line 32, to add—

"If the land form part of a deer forest, and if the assignation of such land for the purposes of this Act would seriously impair the use of the remainder as a deer forest, unless the Land Commission are satisfied that such result would on the whole increase the prosperity of the inhabitants generally of the district in which such deer forest is situated."

Whatever may be thought of this Amendment, it is one which, I think, need raise no angry passions amongst us. It is an Amendment of a thoroughly hypothetical form. I am of opinion that in certain cases deer forests are not only legitimate, but are the very best use to which the land can be put from the point of view not of the sporting tenant or of the landlord, but of the people themselves; and all I ask is that in such cases the Land Commission shall have power to judge of such a fact, and shall have power, if they think that a deer forest is not a benefit to the population, to say that it shall be destroyed. I wish to be quick; but there is one observation I should like to make which has a bearing on a great deal of the discussion we have had on the matter in previous Sittings of the Committee. The hon. Members in this House known as the Crofter Members have over and over again reproached the Government with doing nothing for the cottar as distinguished from the crofter. I venture to say that in a certain part of the Highlands the only occupation which can be given to the cottar population depends directly or indirectly upon the deer forests. Leaving the case of the cottars, and considering the case of the crofters, let me mention a case which came within my own knowledge. I know of a district in the Highlands where the population is far removed from any centre of industry, from the sea, and from any locality where they could by any possibility obtain employment. There is in that district a deer forest, and by the mere presence of that deer forest, or rather by the fact that all the crofters obtain occupation in it during the shooting season, these people get an amount of wages equal in extent to three times the amount they pay for rent. In addition to this, they get indirectly that large amount of employment to which reference has already been made by more than one speaker. That case is not a solitary instance. Supposing that in that, or in some other parallel case, the actual result of this Bill were to give to the crofter additional land to the destruction of the deer forest, the inevitable consequence would be that the crofter would lose an employment which would equal, as I say, three times the amount of his rent, and that the cottar—that very class whom hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway have taken under their especial protection—would be absolutely deprived of employment altogether. I have framed the Amendment so that it will include not merely the crofters, but the cottars also—the poorest people of the district. All I ask is that when, in the opinion of the Land Commission, it would be to the injury of these poor people to destroy a deer forest, they shall have power to say that it shall continue to exist. I think the Committee will admit that I have not only designed the Amendment in a spirit of moderation, but that the Amendment is in itself a moderate one.

Amendment proposed,

In page 6, line 32, after the word "steading," to insert the following sub-section:—"If the land form part of a deer forest, and if the assignation of such land for the purposes of this Act would seriously impair the use of the remainder as a deer forest, unless the Land Commission are satisfied that such result would on the whole increase the prosperity of the inhabitants generally of the district in which such deer forest is situated."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): With the general intention and spirit of this Amendment I am disposed to sympathize; but I am afraid that the language the right hon. Gentleman employs is too general. If the right hon. Gentleman will observe, he says—

"Unless the Land Commission are satisfied that such result would on the whole increase the prosperity of the inhabitants generally."

Now, what kind of consideration does that convey? It is difficult to say. The right hon. Gentleman refers to the cottars, or rather he takes them both. Well, it is often the case that the crofter hires himself and his pony for the shooting season; and I should imagine that if there are any quantity of crofters who derive advantage from a deer forest, they will not apply to the Commissioners to have land granted to them so as to destroy that forest. If there is a general feeling that the taking of land would be destructive to the forests, we may rest assured that those who derive benefit from them will not take any step to their injury. I fear that these words are far too general.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I do not wish to enter into the discussion of these deer forests again. I have no doubt that each side will maintain its own opinion upon the matter; but I must say I think it would be unfortunate on our part to give any countenance whatever to the continuance and maintenance of deer forests. As to the number of sheep which have been displaced by the deer forests, whatever the Commissioners may say, they have received evidence as to certain facts on this point. I would mention these facts to the Committee briefly. According to the evidence that was laid before the Commission and submitted to this House, it appears that these deer forests displaced about 10 per cent of the sheep in the five counties in Scotland dealt with in the Bill. It appears that the number of sheep displaced by deer forests——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think the hon. Member is going back on a question that has already been decided. This Amendment is a subordinate question, which does not raise that issue.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I do not wish to go into the general question raised by a previous Amendment, and which is in part raised here. I speak on the subject from the standpoint of the Lord Advocate, who admitted that he agreed with the general view of the statement of my right hon. Friend. The view of the Amendment of my right hon. Friend is this. He desires that when the Commissioners are satisfied that the general prosperity of a district is promoted by the existence of a deer forest that that deer forest shall not be sacrificed at the instance of the five crofters who are to be the promoters of the application. The Committee will, therefore, observe that the case that is put by the Amendment is one that may well arise. Five crofters may make an application to the Land Commission, and my right hon. Friend desires that the Commissioners shall not merely consider whether it would be to the interest of these persons that the land should be assigned to them, but that the other side of the question shall be considered, and that the Commissioners shall decide whether a much larger number of people would not have their interests sacrificed if this benefit were conferred upon a small number. There cannot be a more general consideration of popular advantage than that proposed by this Amendment. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate demurs to the generality of the terms of this proposal; but I would point out that my right hon. Friend's desire is to focus the attention of the Land Commissioners upon the district which has occupation supplied to it through the existence of a deer forest—to the area over which the deer forest sends out an influence tending to prosperity. That is the pith of the case. The hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) believes that there is no employment given to districts by these deer forests; but the Lord Advocate believes that such employment is given, and the question the Committee will have to consider is whether, when a deer forest supplies occupation to the people, the main industry of a district shall be destroyed in the interests of a few.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): This seems to me a very moderate Amendment. I should be sorry to go over the whole argument as to deer forests again. The question is—Is this Amendment necessary? The only thing the right hon. Gentleman who moves the Amendment seems to be afraid of is that under the clause deer forests will be destroyed. Well, as to that, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider the very sensible remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Sir James Fergusson), who pointed out that under this clause you are not going to destroy the deer forests or drive the deer away wholesale, and turn new crofters on to the existing forests. Your operation is only as to existing crofters; you are going to give them a little extension of land at the foot of the hills. It seems to me that the language of this proposal is very vague; and, seeing that it would render it necessary for the Commissioners in every case to go into somewhat complicated questions, and that, after all, it is not requisite, I trust that the right hon. Gentleman will not press his proposal.

Dr. R. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I think this is a matter which we can leave to the discretion of the Land Commissioners, who will be appointed for the express purpose of deciding questions of this sort. If we appoint honest men, why should we hamper them with instructions of this kind?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The hon. Member who has just sat down cannot have listened to the able speech of my hon. and learned Friend near me (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson). My hon. and learned Friend pointed out, in the clearest manner, that five crofters would have it in their power, supposing that deer forests should be included in the Bill, to destroy not only the occupation of many other crofters, but of the whole cottar population. The hon. Gentleman opposite will, therefore, see that he has not understood the case. As to the observations of the hon. Baronet who has just sat down—[Sir George Campbell: I am not a Baronet.] I beg the hon. Member's pardon. I venture to say that I know more about deer forests than he does; and I think it is clear that cases might arise where the taking away of pasture, not in itself extending over very many acres, will be quite sufficient to destroy the deer forests. It is to meet cases of this kind that I propose this Amendment. I hope the Government will see their way to accept these words. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate objected to two or three words in the Amendment. If he can remodel it so as to meet his own objections, whilst preserving the tenour of my proposal, I shall be glad to accept it in its altered form.

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I think the Committee will view with suspicion this new-born zeal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour) in the interest of the crofter population. At every stage of the Bill the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends have objected to any Amendment calculated to operate to the benefit of the crofters. I hope the Lord Advocate will have a better notion of the feeling of the people than to accept this Amendment.

Sir DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): I think this a very reasonable Amendment. If the Lord Advocate think it proper to alter a word or two to make the Amendment less general well and good; but whether or not I hope he will accept it.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Shortly, the argument by which this proposed Amendment is supported is this—that under a previous clause of the Bill any five crofters may apply to have their holdings enlarged, and that five crofters, by taking a portion of a deer forest, might seriously impair the prosperity of the inhabitants generally. If that is really the object of the Amendment, I suggest that the clause should run thus—

"If the land form part of a deer forest, and if the assignation of such land for the purposes of the Act would seriously impair the use of the remainder as a deer forest, and would act injuriously on the prosperity of the inhabitants generally of the district in which such deer forest is situate."

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not object to that.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I certainly object very strongly to any clause countenancing deer forests; and if the Government accept the Amendment I shall insist upon a division.

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment,

To leave out all the words from the word "forest," in line 3, to the words "the prosperity" in line 4, in order to insert the words "and would act injuriously on,"—(*Mr. Chance,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words 'unless the Land Commission are satisfied that such result would on the whole increase' stand part of the said Amendment."

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I hope the Lord Advocate will maintain his position on this Amendment. My hon. Friend (Mr. Chance) has undoubtedly taken a very beneficial interest in this Bill; but I do not see why we should put any more restrictions in it. We are really going on from bad to worse. There is a little line put in here and a little line put in there to limit the operation of the sub-section. We have toiled here night after night to make the Bill of some value to the people, and when we have finished the Bill will only be fit to throw out of the window. I hope the Lord Advocate will not accept this Amendment. Heaven knows, his own objections are quite sufficient.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Deer forests are an unmitigated nuisance. A right hon. Gentleman talked just now about deer forests being of such an altitude that they could not be of any use for grazing purposes. Last winter I was in the Highlands, and conversed a good deal with practical farmers on this point. I put this Question to them—"Is it your opinion that deer forests are useful, on the ground that they occupy places where no other cattle but deer can get food?" and the answer in every case was that it is quite a fallacy to suppose that deer forests can be maintained on any such ground, because if it is asserted that deer forests——

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must be unaware that I have already ruled that it is improper to go back to the general question of deer forests.

MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I intend to support the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance). What we desire is to legislate for the benefit of the whole district, and not to enable any five crofters to do that which may cause serious mischief to the district. It appears to me that the suggestion of the hon. Member for South Kilkenny exactly meets the case.

SIR JOHN RAMSDEN (York, W.R., Osgoldcross): I entirely agree with what has fallen from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay), and will only add one word. This clause is purely an enabling clause. It can by no possibility do any harm, but it may do a great deal of good. It may prevent a great injury being inflicted on a district; and, therefore, I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will see his way to accept it.

THE CHAIRMAN: It probably will be well to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance), and then vote on the whole Amendment.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words 'would act injuriously on' be there inserted, put, and *agreed to.*

Question proposed,

"That the words 'If the land form part of a deer forest, and if the assignation of such land for the purposes of this Act would seriously impair the use of the remainder as a deer forest, and would act injuriously on the prosperity of the inhabitants generally of the district in which such deer forest is situated,' be inserted after the word 'steading,' in line 32."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am sure it is not the wish of anyone engaged in carrying this Bill to enact anything which would act injuriously on the general prosperity of a district. It seems very difficult to object to the Amendment as it now stands; and if it is the wish of the Committee I shall be pleased to agree to it.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 165; Noes 102: Majority 63.—(Div. List, No. 73.)

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): Mr. Courtney, I beg to move that you do now report Progress. We cannot have the slightest hope of carrying the Bill to-night, even if we sat until 2 or 3 o'clock. It is now after 1 o'clock, and therefore I think we ought to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): There is no chance of finishing the Committee to-night.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: There is nothing seriously debateable in the remainder of the clause. We might be allowed to take the clause.

Question put, and *negatived.*

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): The Amendment I have now to move is one which the Lord Advocate will, no doubt, be willing to accept. It is an Amendment to limit the enlarged holdings of the crofters to a rental of £15 a-year. There are two sets of crofters who are very advantageous to the country. There are the small crofters, who have a bit of land and have some other occupation besides the cultivation of the soil; and there are the larger crofters, who are in the position of small farmers. I am inclined to think that the man the value of whose croft is under £15 a-year is in the position of being neither one nor the other. The Lord Advocate has given the benefit of this clause to crofters up to £30. I do not think there is any reason why enlarged crofts should be limited to £15 value. I hope the Lord Advocate will be disposed to make this concession.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 42, to leave out Sub-section (5).—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'shall not be competent for the Land Commission' stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I may tell the Committee that the provision limiting the enlarged holdings to £15 was introduced because it was recommended by the Royal Commission that the powers of the Land Commission should not go beyond that figure. But, in point of fact, there is a great deal to recommend this provision. It is quite true that we propose to give the benefits of the Bill generally to crofters up to £30. Many people think that is too high; but I think there are very few persons answering the description of crofters the value of whose crofts come near £30. I rather imagine a person whose premises were valued at £30 a-year would feel insulted at being called a crofter. It is not the object of the Bill to turn every man into a farmer with a £30 valuation. I do not wish to detain the Committee further. We take the limit recommended by the Royal Commission, and if reasons were needed for that recommendation they would be readily forthcoming.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to propose that the limit be raised from "fifteen" to "thirty." I cannot see what objection there can be, as a man with a £30 valuation cannot be considered a very large farmer.

Amendment proposed, in page 7, line 3, to leave out the word "fifteen," and insert the word "thirty."—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'fifteen' stand part of the Clause."

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): In reference to what the Lord Advocate has just said, I should like to remind the Committee that the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan), in introducing the Bill, said its object was to turn the crofters into nice little farmers. I cannot understand why the Lord Advocate resisted my Amendment. It seems to me that a man who has a croft too large for a crofter in the ordinary sense of the word, and not large enough to be a farmer, is not an advantageous man for the country. We do not want to make it compulsory on the Commission, in every case, to increase the holdings to the value of £30, but we want to make it permissible; we wish it to be within the power of the Commission to convert the crofters into small farmers. I think this is a reasonable Amendment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson)—namely, to leave out the clause altogether. Under Clause 12 the Commissioners are permitted to grant an increase of the holdings upon the joint application of five or more crofters if, as you inform them, "this shall appear to them to be just and expedient." I think that is the only limitation we should place on the Commission; that is quite sufficient without all the sub-sections of this clause. Let us look at the value of these sub-sections. The first provides that the land must be near to the holdings, and must belong to the same landlord. That cuts away nearly all the land. The right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan), in introducing the Bill, spoke about the deer forest system, and especially of the case of the notorious Winans. That man's forest of 200 or 300 square miles, or whatever its size may be, will, by Sub-section (1), be entirely excluded from the operation of the Bill. Then, by Sub-section (2) you require that if the land is subject to an existing lease the assent of both the farmer and landlord must be obtained; so that this sub-section takes away another large portion of land which it might be just and expedient to give to the crofters. Then, under Sub-section (3) you are not to take away land if it materially damages the letting value of the remainder of the farm. Of course, if you take away any portion of land it will materially damage the letting value of the remaining land. Under Sub-head (*d*) you are not to take away any land, either arable or pasture, that will substantially impair the amenity of such residence or farm steading. By Sub-section (4) you provide that the aggregate value of the land assigned for the enlargement of the crofter's holdings shall not exceed a certain figure; and by the 6th sub-section the Land Commission may not raise the value of the holdings to a higher amount than £15 each. So that, practically, all you do by the sub-sections of this clause is to take away all that you conceded in Clauses 11 and 12. Now, I think the limitation under Clause 12 is quite sufficient, especially for the class of men who probably will be appointed as Land Commissioners. It is quite enough to say that the Commissioners shall only give what they consider to be just and expedient. The limitations provided in the sub-sections of Clause 13 are unjust, inexpedient, and will only make the Bill a dead letter. I have already pointed out that if you give the crofters their land rent free you will not stop this agitation and settle the Land Question. What the crofters want is more land, and under these sub-sections you take away all the land available for increasing the holdings. I shall do everything I can to prevent the Bill passing, because I believe it to be a sham and a delusion.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 120; Noes 89: Majority 31.—(Div. List, No. 74.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do now report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. T. Blake.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

POST OFFICE SITES BILL.—[BILL 148.]

(*Mr. C. R. Spencer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. C. R. SPENCER (Groom-in-Waiting) (Northamptonshire, Mid): At this hour I shall not venture to make any long statement; but the Government is anxious to have this Bill read a second time to-night. The object of the Bill is simply to enable a new and larger site to be acquired by the Post Office authorities for a Post Office in Birmingham. If the House will allow the Bill to be read a second time we propose to refer it to a Select Committee, where the details can be discussed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. C. R. Spencer.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee:—Committee to consist of Five Members, Three to be nominated by the House and Two by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented two clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.

METROPOLITAN POLICE STATIONS BILL.—[BILL 169.]

(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. BROADHURST) (Birmingham, Bordesley): I ask the leave of the House to read this Bill a second time. There is little in it that is contentious, or of a Party character. The principle of the Bill has been agreed to by three successive Governments, and I hope the House will allow it to be read a second time now. [*Cries of* "Agreed!"] If that is the feeling of the House I shall be willing to sit down.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Broadhurst.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

INTERNATIONAL AND COLONIAL COPYRIGHT BILL.—[BILL 156.]

(*Mr. Acland, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr.

Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I beg leave to move, Sir, "That you do now leave the Chair." The Government will not ask the Committee to go further to-night than into Committee, because some difficulties have arisen. Some hon. Members want time to consider some of the details of the measure. If we can go into Committee now, we will put it down for Committee on some other evening for an earlier hour than this.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Broadhurst.*)

Sir HENRY HOLLAND (Hampstead): I do not rise to oppose the course suggested by the hon. Member in charge of the Bill (Mr. Bryce); but I desire, in a few words, to point out the grave objections that have been raised outside the House to the 6th clause, in so far, at all events, as it is made retrospective. It provides that, after the passing of the Order in Council, a publisher may dispose of copies and translations which he then has in hand, but that he is estopped from doing any more in respect of a work which would be brought under the law. As regards ordinary books, which are not illustrated, no great harm, perhaps, will be done by this retrospective action. But the case is very different in respect of illustrated books, upon which great expense has been incurred; and again, in respect of musical compositions of foreign origin, large sums have been expended in revising, fingering, and editing those works by eminent English musicians, thus, in truth, creating a fresh and distinct property. The expense so incurred can only be recouped by continued sales. I may add that in many of these cases the authors of the foreign compositions have long been dead. I have received very strong remonstrances against this clause, as now worded; and I trust the Government will consent either to omit it, or to limit its retrospective action. Upon this understanding, and also upon the understanding that they will not proceed with the 9th clause affecting the Colonies until they have ascertained the views and wishes of the Colonial Governments upon it, I will withdraw any objection to the Speaker leaving the Chair, as suggested.

The SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) (Cornwall, Launceston): In regard to Clause 6, the matter which the right hon. Gentleman has referred to has been brought before the Board of Trade, and there is to be a meeting to-morrow, at which experts will be present, to consider it. In regard to the Colonial portion of the Bill, the Government has already undertaken not to go on with it until the opinion of the Colonies is obtained.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday* 6th May.

INFANTS BILL.—[Bill 139.]

(*Mr. Attorney General, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Bryce.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 5th April.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Ince.*)

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I hope the Committee will consent to go on with this Bill now. It has been introduced in the same form in which it was introduced into the House of Lords last year. We believe that very few questions will arise, and that it will not take long in going through Committee; and, therefore, I trust the hon. and learned Member will allow it to go through.

Mr. INCE (Islington, E.): There are a great many Members, and especially on the other side of the House, who are anxious to go into this matter, and who have not yet had an opportunity of discussing and considering it. I removed my block to meet the convenience of my hon. Friend the Under Secretary; but I would not have done so if I had known there was to be an attempt to force the Bill on in this way at such an hour as this.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): I would call the attention of the Committee to the fact that the Chairman has been in the Chair, with very little intermission, ever since 5 o'clock, and for that reason alone I think we ought to report Progress.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I should like to warn hon. Members before they go further that this is quite a different Bill from that which passed this House last year.

Mr. BRYCE: Well, Sir, I will not press the Committee now if there is any considerable feeling in favour of reporting Progress; but I hope that on a future evening, considering the urgent necessity for this measure, the Committee will consent to go on, even at so late a hour as this.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I will not oppose the Motion for reporting Progress, Sir, considering the length of time you have been in the Chair; but this is a Bill which ought to be passed, and I hope that the Committee will consent to deal with it, even at a late hour, as soon as possible.

Motion *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

COMPANIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 158.] COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee, and *reported*, without Amendment.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): Perhaps the House will allow the Bill to be read a third time now. There has been no Amendments in it.

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

MOTIONS.

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TITHE RENT-CHARGE (EXTRAORDINARY) AMENDMENT BILL.

Select Committee on the Tithe Rent-Charge (Extraordinary) Amendment Bill to consist of Sixteen Members:—Committee *nominated* of,—Mr. Mellor, Mr. Biddulph, Mr. Thomas Bolton, Mr. Brookfield, Mr. Carew, Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Duckham, Sir Julian Goldsmid, Sir Thomas Grove, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Stanley Leighton, Mr. Norton, Mr. Donal Sullivan, and Mr. Carvell Williams, with power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.—(*Mr. Secretary Childers.*)

COTTAGERS' ALLOTMENT GARDENS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Chaplin, Bill to encourage and facilitate the provision of Allotment Gardens for Cottagers, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Chaplin, Sir William Hart Dyke, Colonel Harcourt, Viscount Curzon, and Mr. Charles Hall.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 186.]

TERMS OF REMOVAL (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Terms of Removal from Houses in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 187.]

RETURNING OFFICERS' CHARGES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to regulate the Expenses and to control the Charges of Returning Officers at Parliamentary Elections in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 188.]

ASSISTANT COUNTY SURVEYORS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Small, Bill to amend the Law relating to Assistant County Surveyors in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Small, Mr. Marum, Mr. Conway, and Mr. O'Hanlon.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 189.]

House adjourned at a quarter before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 16*th April,* 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Companies Acts Amendment * (82); Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (Public Health Act) * (83).

Third Reading—Trees (Ireland) * (79); Cape Race Lighthouse * (60); Poor Relief (Ireland) * (74).

Royal Assent—Army Annual [49 *Vict.* c. 8]; Prison Officers' Superannuation [49 *Vict.* c. 9]; Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (No. 2) [49 *Vict.* c. 10]; Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment [49 *Vict.* c. 12]; Compensation for Damages [49 *Vict.* c. 11].

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.

Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92. and 93. be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Easter be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the recess.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—DISCONTINUANCE OF NAAS GAOL.

QUESTION. OBSERVATION.

The Earl of MILLTOWN asked Her Majesty's Government, Why the gaol at Naas has been discontinued as a county prison; and, whether, before this step was taken, the magistrates or official body of the county were in any way consulted? The noble Earl said the closing of the gaol in question necessitated the sending of prisoners to Dublin Gaol, a distance of 26 miles, however short their term of imprisonment was to be, and that involved considerable expense.

The Earl of **LONGFORD** said, that objection was taken to the new classification of prisons in Ireland, which, in many cases, was not in accordance with the views of Local Authorities. Between Dublin and Sligo there was no first-class prison. From his own Petty Sessions district, eight-day sentences and upwards were sent to Dublin, 70 miles, instead of to Mullingar, 10 miles, where a prison had been wrongly abolished. Although it might be shown that the cost of removing prisons was less than the maintenance of gaol establishments, the arrangement was objectionable.

The **SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA** (The Earl of Kimberley) said, the subject of the unnecessary number of prisons in Ireland was constantly under the consideration of the Government some years ago; and he might remind his noble Friends that prisons in England had been diminished in number. He would offer no opinion upon the subject as regarded Ireland, but would simply answer the Question on the Paper. When he was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, some years ago, he found there was a superfluity of prisons in Ireland. The gaol at Naas had been discontinued as a county prison in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners on Prisons in Ireland that the Naas Prison should be handed over to the Military Authorities for court martial prisoners, and to cease to be a local prison. It could not, therefore, be now used for local purposes. The County Authorities were not consulted as to whether the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners should be acted on; but the Constabulary Authorities were consulted as to the most desirable mode of disposing of the local prisoners.

The Earl of **MILLTOWN** said, he thought that the County Authorities should have been consulted in the matter.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND.

OBSERVATIONS.

Lord **DENMAN**: My Lords, I think it would be a wise thing if we passed a Resolution to the effect that no Peer who has not personally visited Ireland shall be allowed to vote on Irish questions. I believe if noble Lords and hon. Members of the other House were to take the trouble to go over there, and see the state of the country—and there is plenty of time for the purpose before the end of the Easter Vacation—they would convince themselves that the Parliament of England is doing its duty in not wishing to see the Bank of Ireland turned again into a House of Parliament, excluding all the old Peers of that country.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (PUBLIC HEALTH ACT) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to Dromore West and Kilrush Unions—Was *presented* by The Earl of Kimberley; read 1ª; and *referred* to the Examiners. (No. 83.)

House adjourned at Five o'clock, to
Thursday the 6th of May next,
a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 16*th April*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—New Member Sworn—Charles Dalrymple, esquire, for the Borough of Ipswich.

Ways and Means—*considered in Committee*—*Resolutions* [April 15] *reported.*

Private Bills (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Cricklewood, Kilburn, and Harrow Road Tramways; North Metropolitan Tramways (No. 1); Skegness, Chapel, St. Leonards, and Alford Tramways (Abandonment).*

Public Bills—*Ordered*—*First Reading*—Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland) [193]; Customs and Inland Revenue* [190]; National Debt* [191].

First Reading—Burgh Police and Health (Scotland)* [194].

Committee—Report—Infants [139]; Highways Acts Amendment [149].

Committee—Report—Third Reading—Metropolitan Police Stations* [169], and *passed.*

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

——o——

CRICKLEWOOD, KILBURN, AND HARROW ROAD TRAMWAYS BILL

(*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Charles Forster,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed." —(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I rise, Sir, to move—

> "That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, Five to be nominated by the House, and Four by the Committee of Selection:—That all Petitions against the Bill be referred to the Committee; and that such of the Petitioners, who have deposited their Petitions within the time limited by the Standing Orders, as are entitled to be heard upon their Petitions, according to the Standing Orders and practice of Parliament, be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses, upon their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petitions."

In taking this course, I may say that this Motion is not intended to be in any sense an opposition to the extension of tramways. It is made in the interests of the general public, and at the suggestion of a number of Metropolitan Members, who have met to consider this and some other questions affecting local government. The House will probably recollect that a short time ago the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bermondsey (Mr. Thorold Rogers) was permitted by the House to deal in a similar manner with various Bills promoted by the Water Companies of London. The hon. Member succeeded in getting those Bills referred to a Hybrid Committee at the suggestion of the same Metropolitan Members in whose behalf I now move to refer this Bill to a similar Hybrid Committee. I would venture, in the first place, to call attention to the provisions of the Tramways Act of 1870. That Act settled the principle upon which the laying down of tramways was to proceed; and since the passing of the Act tramways have been laid down under General Orders in pursuance of the provisions of the Act, and under special Acts of Parliament modifying the provisions of that measure. The Act of 1870 was the result of an inquiry into the whole question of tramways by a Special Committee. At that time tramways were more or less an experiment; and it was thought desirable that favourable conditions should be granted to the Tramway Companies to encourage the introduction of tramways into the Metropolis and into the large cities of the Provinces. Tramways have now become an assured financial success; and the conditions that were given to these Companies in 1870 in order to encourage the laying down of tramway lines are scarcely necessary, or even just, in the interests of the public at the present time. As a proof of what I say in regard to the financial success of tramways, I may remind the House that the shares of some of these Companies stand at from 50 to 60 per cent premium, and are considered to be a very desirable source of investment. One of the provisions of the Act of 1870 in the interests of the public was that the Tramway Companies should maintain the roadway between the lines and 18 inches of the roadway on each side of their lines. Another provision in the interests of the public was that, at the expiration of a certain period, the Local Authority should have power to purchase these tramways for the public. By Section 43 of the Act of 1870 it is provided that at the end of 21 years, and at the end of every seven years afterwards, the Local Authority may purchase the Tramways at their fair value, exclusive of any allowance for past or future profits of the undertaking, or any compensation for compulsory sale or other consideration whatsoever. Now, Sir, this valuable right of purchase will very soon come into existence. The period of 21 years is fast approaching when the Local Authority, representing the public, will have to consider whether this right of purchase is to be exercised. Since the passing of the Act of 1870 a very considerable number of tramways have been made in London and in various parts of England. Under the provisions of that Act the Tramway Companies are required to arrange with the Local Authorities and the Road Authorities, and the Local Authorities and the Road Authorities have power to make their own arrangements with the Tramway Companies. The result is that there is no system, and there is no principle governing the arrangements made by the various authorities with the various promoters of tramway lines. In one case the Tramway Company maintains only that portion of the road over which the line runs, and the Road Authority maintains the portion of the road on each side of the tramway between the line and the kerb; in other cases the Tramway Company maintains the whole of the road, and the Road Authority contributes a portion of the expense; in some cases the whole of the roadway is maintained by the Road Authority at the expense of the Tramway Company. In other cases a sum of money is contributed by the Tramway Company towards purposes of improvement carried out by the Local Authority. As a matter of fact, there is no principle whatever governing the arrangements between the Local Authority and the Road Authority and the Tramway Company; and the result is that in many parts of London the state of the roads is very unsatisfactory. Where the Local Authority and the Road Authority have been vigilant, and have attended to the interests of the public, good and satisfactory conditions have been arranged with the Tramway Companies, and the roadways are maintained in a satisfactory condition; but, on the other hand, where the Local and Road Authorities have been lax in discharging their duty in watching over the interests of the public, and have made unsatisfactory arrangements, not only are unfair conditions imposed upon the public, but the roadways are not maintained in a satisfactory condition. As I have said, there is no principle whatever adopted in connection with the laying down, maintenance, and extension of tramway lines at the present time. I venture, therefore, to say that the time has arrived when this House ought to take into consideration the conditions under which tramways have existed in London for something like 15 or 16 years, and especially as to the right of purchase. Indeed, all the various matters which affect the relations between the general public and the Railway Companies ought to be seriously considered. I say that the time has arrived when the House should turn its attention to the arrangements which are to be made with the Tramway Companies, and take care that in any further extension of the tramway system in London arrangements are made which will protect the interests of the public. There is another question of very great and practical importance which ought not to be lost sight of, and that is the duty which the Tramway Companies ought to discharge in connection with the conveyance of workmen by early and cheap cars. The Railway Companies have recently been required to run workmen's trains for the convenience of the working classes of the Metropolis. The North London Railway Company, the London, Chatham, and Dover Company, the Great Eastern Company, the Metropolitan District Company, and other Railway Companies, have been required to run workmen's trains; and they have, I believe, met that requirement even in excess of the stipulations made with them when they have sought to obtain further Parliamentary powers. Now, I maintain that it is quite necessary in the interests of the public, and especially in the interests of the working classes, that the Tramway Companies should be compelled, in like manner, to run workmen's cars. It is of no use talking about relieving the congested portions of this City by simply transferring the working classes, so far as their dwellings go, to the suburban districts of London, unless you also afford to the working people an opportunity of getting into the City to their work in the morning and home from their work again at night, at reasonable fares. The Commission which sat upon the Housing of the Working Classes dealt with this important question, and it was suggested that the Tramway Companies should be required to run workmen's cars for the convenience of the working classes. It certainly cannot be regarded as, in any sense, an unfair condition to impose upon these Tramway Companies, when we take into consideration the numerous advantages which they have over the Railway Companies. In the first place, they have obtained their permanent way gratuitously, whereas the Railway Companies have been obliged to expend millions of money in acquiring land for their permanent way. In the next place, they are not subject to the passengers' duty, as the Railway Companies are. It is quite true that they pay rates and taxes, but so do the Railway Companies. Under these circumstances, I submit, in the interest of the working classes, that, seeing that these Tramway Companies enjoy practically a monopoly—and what has turned out to be a most profitable monopoly—in the interest of the working classes this House should take care that proper provisions are made in the direction I have indicated. All these questions form part and parcel of the general reconsideration of tramway legislation; and I say that it is desirable, in dealing with the Tramway Bills before the House in the present Session--for the one we are now discussing is only one of a series of Bills—in dealing with these Tramway Bills we should decide upon sending them to a strong Committee, in order that the questions I have raised may be fully and carefully considered, and that care should be taken, while refraining from imposing new or unfair conditions upon the Tramway Companies, that the Tramway Companies are not allowed to obtain increased powers to the detriment of the public, or, in fact, any fresh advantage, without giving a *quid pro quo* in consideration for such powers and advantages. If these Tramway Bills—the Cricklewood, Kilburn, and Harrow Road Bill, and the other Tramway Bills which are to come on later, are referred to different Select Committees in the ordinary way, it is just possible that a full consideration of all these important matters, in the case of some particular Bill, may escape the attention of the particular Committee which will deal with the question. It is for this reason, without any hostility to the Tramway Companies, and without desiring to make any sweeping change to the disadvantage of these Companies, that I propose that this Bill shall be referred to a Hybrid Committee instead of an ordinary Select Committee. I intend to propose afterwards that the other Tramway Bills which have been introduced this Session shall be referred to the same Committee. A Hybrid Committee will be able to deal with all the questions involved in these Bills upon something like a principle, and protect the public generally, and especially look after the interests of the working classes in connection with the tramway system. I will not venture to stand longer between the House and the more important Business which it has this evening to consider. It is not my fault that I have had to say so much upon the question as I have said. The Bill itself has been brought on this evening without any communication with me in any way whatever. I am only discharging a public duty in moving that it be referred to a Hybrid Committee. I may add that I was led to believe that on the part of the promoters of these Bills there would be no opposition to the proposal I make, to refer them to a Hybrid Committee, inasmuch as I had an interview with an agent acting for one of these Tramway Bills; and I have in my possession a letter, in which that gentleman gives his assent, provided that certain alterations are made in the terms of reference to the course I propose of referring them to a Hybrid Committee. I made the alterations in accordance with the suggestion of the agent. As I presumed that he was acting indirectly for the other Tramway Companies who were interested in the matter, I had every reason to believe that no objection would be raised to my proposal. I am, therefore, surprised to find that the Cricklewood and Harrow Tramway Company has broken through what I believed to be the understanding, and now refuses to consent to the reference of this Bill to a Hybrid Committee. It is because I think that if these Tramway Bills go to a Hybrid Committee every matter will be fully and carefully considered, and the interests of the public protected, that I move that this Bill be so referred.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out the word "committed," in order to add the words "referred to a Select Committee, Five to be nominated by the House, and Four by the Committee of Selection,"—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the word 'committed' stand part of the Question."

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I do not know whether the discussion of this Motion is likely to occupy any considerable amount of time; but if it is, in view of the very important Business which is to be brought forward this evening, I think it would be advisable to adjourn the debate. I am not of opinion, however, that the debate need last long; and I have, therefore, thought it convenient that

I should rise at once and say that I am not prepared to support the Motion which the hon. Member for North St. Pancras (Mr. T. H. Bolton) has made, because I do not think that the hon. Member has made out a case. The Motion, consequently, is not one which will require any considerable amount of debate. It is quite true, as the hon. Member has stated, that the time is not far distant when it will be necessary to consider the Act of 1870, as the period provided by Parliament when the Tramway Companies may be purchased out is now rapidly approaching, and it may be necessary to deal with the whole question of the construction of tramways. But it will be requisite, in that event, to make out a much larger case and to go at much greater length into the general question than the hon. Gentleman has done to-day. He has invited the attention of the House to what was done in 1873; but I think it may become necessary not to appoint simply a Hybrid Committee, but a very strong Committee indeed, for the special purpose of considering the position of the whole question of tramway construction. I confess that I do not see any reason for departing from the usual course of procedure in the case of this particular Bill which is now submitted to the House for second reading. I certainly do not think that any case has been made out for delaying its reference in the ordinary way to a Select Committee. The hon. Member has raised two points, the first of which is the diversity of the relations between the Local Authorities and the Tramway Companies. But it is only natural that there should be that diversity in the arrangements made between the Tramway Companies and the Local Authorities, because the conditions existing in different localities vary considerably. In one case you will find a Company who are willing to pay a bonus to the Local Authority in order to secure permission to lay down a tramway, whereas in another case it may be to the interest of the public that the Local Authority should encourage the Tramway Company to lay down a line. I therefore apprehend that this is a question with which the House may be reluctant to interfere. In regard to the second point urged by the hon. Member—namely, the necessity of running early and cheap cars for the conveyance of working men, I believe that both this Bill and the one which follows it—the North Metropolitan Tramways Bill—make express provision that workmens' cars shall be run both in the morning and evening, at the fare of one halfpenny per mile, instead of a penny, which is the ordinary fare, so that one of the objects of the hon. Member is already provided for. But my main point in objecting to the Motion of the hon. Member is this—that the question of tramway construction and legislation may be, I admit, a proper one to be considered, but it should be considered apart from this particular Bill by the appointment of a Committee to take up the whole subject. In the meantime I hope the House will not agree to the proposal of the hon. Member in reference to the present Bill.

Mr. MARRIOTT (Brighton): After the remarks of the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees I hope the hon. Member for North St. Pancras (Mr. T. H. Bolton) will withdraw the Motion. There can be no doubt that the subject of tramway construction is one of considerable interest; but it ought to be dealt with upon the question of the provisions of the General Tramways Act, and not upon a proposal to depart from the ordinary course of Private Bill legislation by referring one particular Bill to a Hybrid Committee. The hon. Gentleman says that he has no intention of raising any opposition to the laying down of tramways; but, as a matter of fact, the Motion he has proposed is simply an opposition, not to tramways generally, but to one tramway in particular. Although the hon. Member tells the House that he speaks in the name of the working classes, his Amendment would only delay the construction of a particular line; and, in that way, so far from benefiting the working classes by his action, the hon. Gentleman would do them a great injury. It would materially injure the working classes to prevent the laying down of a new line of tramways at a time when employment is scarce and the working men have very little to do. It would simply be putting a spoke in the wheel of employment, and preventing a considerable number of working men from obtaining a livelihood. The Tramways Act of 1870 was a general Act, and if the hon. Gentleman wishes the provisions of that Act to be considered, let him move a Resolution to that effect; but to ask the House, instead of referring a particular Bill to a Select Committee in the ordinary way, to refer it to a Hybrid Committee, would simply be to interpose an unnecessary obstacle to the progress of the Bill, if not to stop it altogether.

Mr. T. H. BOLTON: Perhaps the House will allow me to explain. The right hon. Gentleman has evidently misunderstood me. What I said was that I proposed not to deal with this Bill alone, but to refer all the other Bills—five or six in number—to the the same Hybrid Committee, and I have given Notice of a Motion to that effect.

Mr. MARRIOTT: The result of that would be to stop five or six Bills instead of one, and to inflict serious injury upon this description of property. What we want is to encourage enterprize; and yet the hon. Member, speaking in the name of the working classes, is trying not to stop one Tramway Bill, but five or six. I hope that the House, for the sake of the working classes, knowing that tramways are essential to the locomotion of the labouring man, will allow this Bill to go to a Private Bill Committee, where it will receive due consideration. I trust that the hon. Member will withdraw the Motion.

Mr. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth): I cannot help appealing to my hon. Friend the Member for North St. Pancras (Mr. T. H. Bolton) to consider the advisability of accepting the suggestion which has come from the Treasury Bench that he should withdraw his Motion. I agree with a great deal that fell from my hon. Friend in reference to tramways, and it is a subject with which I am very familiar. But I cannot help pointing out that it would be not only very inconvenient, but also very costly, to the Companies who are promoting these Tramway Bills in the present Session of Parliament, if they are called upon to defend them before such a Committee as my hon. Friend proposes to appoint. The whole question of tramway legislation will require revision shortly and it can then be referred to a Committee specially appointed for the purpose of considering it. I am sure that my hon. Friend, upon reconsidering the matter, will see that he has not hit upon the happiest way of getting the question brought under the notice of the House. I would suggest to him that he should withdraw the present Motion, reserving to himself the right at some future time of raising the whole question, to which, I think, in the remarks he has made, he has usefully directed the attention of the House.

Mr. LIONEL COHEN (Paddington, N.): One observation made by my hon. Friend the Member for North St. Pancras (Mr. T. H. Bolton) as a reason for desiring to refer this Bill to a Hybrid Committee was, that it is necessary to make provision for the running of early and cheap workmens' cars. As a matter of fact, the Local Authority who have jurisdiction in the district through which the proposed tramway will pass have already considered that question, and the Company who are promoting the Bill have promised to make adequate provision. It is therefore desirable that the Bill should be dealt with in the ordinary way, and that its progress should not be delayed, nor the expense of promoting it largely increased, by referring it to a Hybrid Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Gentleman withdraw the Amendment?

Mr. T. H. BOLTON: No, Sir. I think I must press the Amendment unless I have some assurance upon the matter.

Question, "That 'committed' stand part of the Question," put, and *agreed to*.

Bill *committed*.

NORTH METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS (No. 1) BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. T. H. Bolton.*)

The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I hope the hon. Member will not press that Motion. The question is precisely the same as that which was raised in regard to the other Bill.

Mr. T. H. BOLTON: Well, in deference to the evident sense of the House, I will withdraw the Motion, on the understanding that when a proposal is made for referring this Tramway Question to a Select Committee for consideration, I shall have the advantage of the support of the hon. Gentleman.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put.

Bill read a second time, and *committed.*

QUESTIONS.

BURMAH—SUPPLY OF WHITWORTH GUNS.

Mr. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is true that, on the capture of Mandalay, a letter was found in the Palace from a London firm, styling themselves Government contractors, dated 30th September 1885, offering to supply a battery of Whitworth guns to the Burmese Government, the guns to be shipped from Liverpool by one steamer, and the carriages and ammunition by different steamers; whether, at the date of this letter, hostilities were imminent between the Government of India and that of Burmah; and, whether there would be any objection to give the name of the firm by whom that letter was written?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Stafford Howard) (Gloucester, Thornbury): The statement contained in the first paragraph of the Question is substantially correct. But if the hon. Member will refer to the Blue Books he will find that, although the relations between the Governments of India and Burmah at the date of the letter were in a critical condition, they were scarcely such as to justify the statement that hostilities were actually imminent. The name of the firm is Messrs. Mackenzie Brothers, of Mark Lane.

ADMIRALTY—THE ROYAL MARINES.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If the Royal Marines are represented at the Board of Admiralty by a superior officer of their own service; if the officers of a Corps which renders such distinguished service to the Country are under any disability, as regards employment on the Staff, compared to officers of the Army whose duties are analagous to their own; and, in such case, if the Lords of the Admiralty will take steps to have this and other invidious distinctions removed?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): The Royal Marines are not represented at the Board of Admiralty by a superior officer of their own branch of the Service, but specially by the First Naval Lord. With regard to the latter portion of the hon. Member's Question I can only say that Marine officers are eligible for Staff appointments in the Army, and three Marine officers are now holding such appointments; but the Board of Admiralty, while fully recognizing the services rendered by this gallant Corps, have no power to make their selection for such posts more frequent than at present, the selection resting entirely with the authorities at the War Office.

TRANSFER OF PROPERTY OF NONCONFORMIST BODIES.

Mr. JONES-PARRY (Carnarvon, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether Her Majesty's Government will introduce a Bill having for its intention the designation of a chairman or minister of a Nonconformist Body or Church as a Corporation Sole, and with the object of more expeditiously and at a lesser expense of obtaining a conveyance of any land as a site for a church or any buildings or lands in trust in connection therewith, and thereby to obviate the necessity of a conveyance to a large body of trustees and the incidental expense of the appointment of new trustees?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): In reply to my hon. Friend, I have to say that I should be glad to facilitate any arrangement which would diminish the expense of transferring property held by Nonconformists on the death or resignation of a trustee; but I do not think it would be possible to make every minister a Corporation Sole.

PRISONS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1877—DISCHARGING OF PRISONERS AT BARLINNIE.

Mr. BAIRD (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether any, and, if so, what steps have been taken to bring to an end the practice of discharging at Barlinnie prisoners convicted in Glasgow and elsewhere; and, whether the practice referred to is in contravention of Section 28 of the Prisons (Scotland) Act of 1877?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): The matter referred to in the Question is still engaging attention, and communinations are at present passing with the Prison Commissioners and the Local Authorities interested in the matter, with a view to its receiving full consideration before a final decision is come to. Pending these communications, the hon. Member would not probably desire that I should offer a legal opinion as to the legality of the particular course followed under Section 28 of the Act.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—"NAYE *v.* FINNIGAN AND FINNIGAN."

Mr. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a Report of the proceedings at the Petty Sessions on 10th April at Caledon, county Tyrone, which appeared in *The Belfast Newsletter* of 12th April; whether he is aware that, in the case of Mr. William Naye against Denis Finnigan and James Finnigan, the former for assaulting him and the latter for aiding and abetting, on 26th March, Mr. Hamilton, R.M., said the magistrates were unanimously of opinion that Denis Finnigan was the entire originator of the disturbance in Mr. Naye's house. He would be imprisoned for one calendar month, with hard labour. He seemed to him, from what he had seen to-day, to be one of the principal disturbers of the peace of the district on the occasion in question; whether, in view of this decision of the magistrate, he has modified the view he formed on Mr. Naye's alleged conduct; and, if he would explain to the House all the circumstances of the case?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, there was a fight outside the public-house between Naye and the man Finnigan, and, that being so, the District Inspector was, he thought, justified in saying they assaulted one another, though the investigation showed that Finnigan was to blame. As to the last paragraph of the Question, he did not express any opinion of his own as to Naye's conduct.

EDUCATION (IRELAND)—INDUSTRIAL AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS—TIPPERARY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Tipperary Industrial School for Girls has accommodation for one hundred girls, provided at an expense of £6,000; and, whether, in March 1881, the school was most favourably reported on by Mr. Lentaigne; and, if so, if he would state on what grounds the Treasury refuse to make a grant to this school for more than sixty-four girls?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I find it stated by the managers of this school that the cost of the buildings and fittings amounted to £6,000, and that the accommodation is sufficient for 100 girls. I have not seen any special Reports upon this school from Sir John Lentaigne in March, 1881; but I believe that in all his Reports since 1880 he speaks favourably of the school. It is not the Treasury who have refused to make a grant to this school for more than 64 children. Successive Chief Secretaries have considered its claims, and, having regard to the fact that the Parliamentary Vote is limited in amount, and that the claims of other localities had to be likewise considered, have found themselves unable to sanction the increase sought for. The claims of the school will be again brought forward for the Chief Secretary's consideration when next year's Estimate is about being settled; but I think it right to say that the County Tipperary is already exceptionally well provided for in the way of industrial schools for Catholic girls. There are four such in the county receiving between them the Parliamentary grant for 279 girls.

THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE—CONSULAR APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. JAMES HUTTON (Manchester, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is a fact that a considerable number of the British Consuls and Vice Consuls holding appointments in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Sweden are not British subjects?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): All the paid Consuls General and Consuls in the countries named are British subjects. The Consuls General at Vienna, Berlin, and Leipzig are unpaid—the two latter are not British subjects. A good many of the Vice Consuls in these and other countries are foreigners. They are, however, unpaid, and to replace them by paid officials, forbidden to engage in trade, would involve an enormous increase to the expenditure on the Consular Service. Whenever qualified British subjects can be found willing to undertake the duties of an unpaid Vice Consul, they are selected by preference.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MR. BROOK, J.P., OF BROOKBOROUGH.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can inform the House what action the Lord Chancellor of Ireland has taken with regard to the speech of Mr. Brook, J.P.?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Lord Chancellor has communicated with Mr. Brook, and called on him for an explanation, which has not yet been furnished.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—SEAMEN IN THE PORT OF LONDON.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether there is difficulty in getting seamen safely on board ships in the Port of London after they have signed agreements in the Board of Trade offices; whether there is a combination of crimps and other persons at the East of London who are giving trouble and creating disturbance; and, whether, by extra police assistance or otherwise, steps can be taken to protect seamen and to bring offenders to justice?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): There have been cases in which difficulties have arisen in getting men on board who have signed articles of agreement. Extra police have been told off for duty at the Mercantile Marine Office and at the docks to protect seamen and to prevent a recurrence of these disturbances.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE ATHENRY AND TUAM DAY MAIL.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If he could state if any offer has been made to the Waterford and Limerick Railway in connection with the carriage of the day mail between Athenry and Tuam; and, can he state the amount of the offer, and also if it was accepted or refused?

Mr. C. R. SPENCER (Groom in Waiting) (Northamptonshire, Mid) (who replied): The Waterford and Limerick Railway Company have been offered a payment of £150 a-year in lieu of the existing payment of £50 a-year for the day mail service between Athenry and Tuam, with a view to secure the improvement of hours desired by the district, but the offer has been declined.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH THE GOODWIN SANDS.

Mr. FITZGERALD (Cambridge) for Colonel King-Harman (Kent, Isle of Thanet) asked the President of the Board of Trade, What arrangements, if any, have been made to establish telegraphic communication between the light ships on the Goodwin Sands and the mainland?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): No arrangements have been made to establish telegraphic communication between the lightships on the Goodwin Sands and the mainland. The experiments for connecting the Sunk Lightship off Harwich with the shore have not yet been reported as successful, and until this is the case it is not propose to extend the experiments to other stations.

EGYPT—SUAKIN AND BERBER RAILWAY.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, If he has received a Copy of a Resolution adopted at a public meeting of the inhabitants of Kenmare, held on the 22nd March, approving of the suggestion that the materials for the projected Suakin and Berber Railway, now lying unused at Woolwich, to be applied to the construction of a Railway from Headford to Kenmare, an Act for which passed in 1884; and, whether he is disposed to favourably consider a proposal for that purpose?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. WOODALL) (Hanley) (who replied): The permanent way material originally intended for the construction of the Suakin-Berber Railway will be applied in due course to certain public uses already approved; and, although a portion thereof might be sold on equitable terms for the purpose suggested, or for any other similar object, it is not improbable that the Department might have to repurchase hereafter.

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—RETURN OF COST OF EACH RANK.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether there would be any difficulty in giving a Return showing the annual cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary for each rank of officer and non-commissioned officer, as distinguished from the pay of the men; and showing, also, separately, the cost of eviction duty, allowances, extra pay, travelling expenses, clothing, arms, ammunition, accoutrements, forage, rent of barracks, cost of furniture, fuel and light, postage, escort, transport, pensions, and gratuities?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): As regards the pay of the officers the information asked for could be given with reasonable accuracy, and the items of expense mentioned in the latter part of the Question, with one exception, are practically the sub-heads of the Vote, and can of course be stated, as they actually are in the Appropriation Accounts. The one item which presents difficulty is the elimination from the general expenditure for extra pay and travelling expenses of the actual amount which may be considered to have arisen on eviction duty, and at best the accuracy of the figures would be very doubtful. This is due to the fact that the accounts are necessarily framed according to the sub-heads of the Vote, and there is no sub-head for "eviction duty." Subject to these observations, if the hon. and learned Member wishes to move for a Return, and will state the year in respect of which he would like to have the information—for the amounts necessarily vary year by year—there is no objection to his having it.

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE—TURKEY AND GREECE—ACTION OF THE POWERS.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will be able before the House separates for the Easter Recess to give us any information as to the position of affairs between Turkey and Greece, or as to any communication which may have passed between the Porte and the Greek Government and the Powers and the Greek Government?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I do not believe, according to the latest information I have from the Foreign Department, that it would be in our power to give any information which would in any way be interesting to the House with regard to communications between Turkey and Greece or between the Greek Government and the Powers. If any information which could be usefully given should arrive before Monday it will unquestionably be communicated to the House. But I am under the impression, in the first place—I may say, I feel the conviction—that no question has arisen in the conduct of the Correspondence which is likely to create serious division of feeling in the House. I think I can give that assurance, and, in the next place, I am disposed to believe that it would be disadvantageous to the public interest if we were not allowed to prosecute the Correspondence for a certain time without any attempt at making a public disclosure.

PARLIAMENT—PUBLIC BUSINESS.

In reply to Mr. CARBUTT and Mr. MACFARLANE,

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian) said, that the Government proposed to take the Crofters Bill on Monday, and not the Railway Rates Bill.

SIR JOHN GORST (Chatham) asked when the Navy Estimates would be proceeded with?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE replied, that the Navy Estimates would be taken immediately after the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill.

REPRINT OF THE ACT OF UNION.

Mr. RAIKES (Cambridge University): May I ask the Prime Minister a Question of which I have not been able to give him Notice? It is, Whether, before the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, he could arrange to have the Act of Union printed and circulated among Members as a Parliamentary Paper?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I see no objection to that course whatever.

Mr. RAIKES: With the proposed Amendments?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: No, no. The Act of Union.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman at the same time issue such subsequent Acts, or portions of subsequent Acts, as repealed provisions of the Act of Union?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I should be glad to do so, but I am afraid it would be a difficult matter.

Mr. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): I should like to ask whether the Act declaring the independence of the Irish Parliament could not also be printed and circulated?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: The subject is new to me, because, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, he did not give me Notice of his Question; but I am inclined to think it might be advantageous to combine the printing of the Act of Union with two other Acts—namely, the Act of 1782 and the Act of 1783.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kerry, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman also have printed the Article referring to the Church Establishment?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE said, there would be some difficulty in going beyond what he had stated.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): In order to make the information as complete as possible, would it be possible for the right hon. Gentleman to have prepared the number of Coercion Acts of various kinds which the Irish Parliament passed between 1782 and 1800?

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): In order to make the Return still more complete, will the right hon. Gentleman also insert in it, if possible, the amounts of money paid to Peers and Members of Parliament to procure the passing of the Act of Union?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: The 19th century, as we all know, is distinguished by a craving for knowledge; but when carried to a certain point it becomes embarrassing. To use a popular adage, one must draw the line somewhere, and I am inclined to believe that to endeavour to give an account of the Coercion Acts passed in the Irish Parliament would entail a great deal of labour, especially when it is considered that it would have to be accompanied by an account of all subsequent Coercion Acts since Coercion Acts began. My impression is that they began before the independence of an Irish Parliament was acknowledged. I think upon the whole we ought to trust to the diligence of hon. Members in obtaining the information for themselves, which they will have afterwards an opportunity of laying before the House. I think that these Acts which have been mentioned may very properly be printed, because they contain cardinal doctrines.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kerry, S.) said, he would again urge the Prime Minister to have reprinted in the Return the Articles of the Union which had been repealed, particularly the 5th, which had reference to the maintenance of an Established Church.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: There is this difficulty, that other portions of the Act of Union have been changed, although no change in principle so important has been made as in this case of the 5th Article, and it would be very difficult to describe these changes. They are, however, quite notorious.

MOTIONS.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR THOMAS ERSKINE MAY, K.C.B., CLERK OF THIS HOUSE.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I rise, Sir, in pursuance of the first Notice which stands in my name, for the purpose of inviting the House to adopt, if it should think fit, a Resolution relating to Sir Erskine May. With respect to this Resolution, I will say that I trust it will be found conformable to the spirit of the words which you, Sir, were pleased yesterday to use from the Chair. I propose that the House should resolve—

> "That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the Right Honourable Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., on his retirement from the office of Clerk of this House, the assurance of its cordial respect and regard, together with its warm acknowledgments for the prolonged and singularly valuable services which, alike by his pen, his action, and his ever ready advice, he has rendered to this House, and to its Members, in the conduct of their business; joining therewith the expression of its earnest hope that the retirement rendered necessary by his indefatigable exertions may serve effectually for the restoration of his health."

Sir, my task in proposing this Resolution is a very simple one—one rendered very simple by the address delivered yesterday from your own mouth and from the Chair of this House, both on account of the admirable character of that address and the comprehensiveness with which it treated the subject, and the immense authority with which it conveyed what I believe to be the universal sentiment of the House of Commons. There could not be an occasion, if I may presume to say so, on which it was more appropriate or more manifestly beneficial that you, being as you are on most occasions simply the President of the House, should revert to the original intention of your Office, from which it derives its title, and should be likewise the spokesman of this House. That being so, Sir, I feel that the task, having been once well discharged, it would not be desirable for me to attempt to discharge it over again with less authority and in an inferior manner. The sentiments of your address, Sir, were not, indeed, new to us. They have dwelt in all our hearts; and if we have to regret the sufferings of Sir Erskine May, and the loss of his original healthy vigour, yet we may, I think, consider him happy in this—that he combines together in an unusual degree the regard and attachment, in the first place, of the establishment of the House over which he has presided with so much judgment, and with such a strong feeling of equity and consideration; in the second place, no doubt, of the Speaker and the Members of this House; and, in the third place, of all those who in foreign countries have learned to look to him as the great classic of Parliamentary lore and learning, and to derive from his pages assistance not less valuable than that which he has given to us in the conduct of our high functions—increasingly high, increasingly important functions, throughout the world. One point only I will venture to refer to—namely, this, that I think it must be fresh to the recollection of the House with what manful courage, after a crisis which I must describe as a terrible crisis in its effects upon the health and in its menacing attack upon life, Sir Erskine May—although no longer a young, or hardly a middle-aged man, yet actuated by high spirit and his intense devotion to work—resumed his duties at this Table, and would suffer nothing but absolute necessity to bring into his mind the idea of quitting them. I am persuaded that he will never forget this House; wherever he may be his heart will remain among us; and as his heart will remain among us, so his memory will be held in honour by us and by our successors for a long series of years.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): It has always been held fitting, on such an occasion as this, that the action taken by the House should not bear the least trace of any Party character, but should be a united expression of opinion of both sides of the House; and, therefore, though not a word needed to be added to the eloquent tribute which the right hon. Gentleman has paid to Sir Erskine May, I rise to second the Motion. The House of Commons is always ready to appreciate the services—the long-continued and faithful services—rendered by its officials; but I think it will be felt, on this occasion, we are justified in entertaining no ordinary sense of what has been done for us, and of the loss which we are sustaining. Sir Erskine May is not only an official who has always, with kindly courtesy, aided each and all of us on any occasion when we desired his services, and has regulated with ability and success the multifarious matters for which the Clerk of the House is responsible; but he is also recognized as one whose learning, authority, and experience gives him a title to the name of statesman, and his position at that Table has reflected honour and credit even upon the House of Commons. We deeply regret the separation which takes place to-day. I will only, in seconding the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman, add that I am sure, on the part of all of us, that this is no formal ceremony; but that, in the words of the Motion, it is a warm acknowledgment of the highest services to this House and to the country.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the Right Honourable Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., on his retirement from the office of Clerk of this House, the assurance of its cordial respect and regard, together with its warm acknowledgment for the prolonged and singularly valuable services which, alike by his pen, his action, and his ever ready advice, he has rendered to this House, and to its Members, in the conduct of their business; joining therewith the expression of its earnest hope that the retirement rendered necessary by his indefatigable exertions may serve effectually for the restoration of his health."—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

MR. RAIKES (Cambridge University): As there does not happen to be now in this House any Member senior to myself who has presided over its debates in Committee, I trust the House will permit me to say a word or two with regard to this Motion. I feel, after the fitting eulogy pronounced yesterday by you, Sir, upon those labours which, unhappily, are to terminate to-day, and which have rendered the name of Sir Erskine May a household word, not merely in this country, but, I may say, wherever the English language is spoken, and Parliamentary institutions flourish, it is, as the Prime Minister has already said, almost superfluous to add anything to what you have said; but I do feel that a certain duty is incumbent upon those who have been in daily and direct association with Sir Erskine May with regard to the conduct of the Business of this House. I should be very ungrateful if I did not attempt, at least, to bear such testimony as I can to the unfailing assistance, and, I may say, the invariable sagacity which characterized the advice by which both I and my Successors in the Chairmanship of Committees have profited during our tenure of Office. In Sir Thomas Erskine May both Speakers and Chairmen of Committees in this House have had a veritable gold mine, and the precious metal has not been hard or difficult to seek; it has always been in that form which I believe is described by mineralogists as free gold. Still I am quite certain that in losing Sir Erskine May we can congratulate him upon the great work which he has left behind him—his fittest and his most abiding memorial—and which must serve to assist the deliberations of many a future House of Commons beyond the period during which he has personally been able to aid us in our debates.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I desire, with the permission of the House, to support the Motion which has been made by the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, and in doing so to express, on the part of my Colleagues, and also of myself, the deep sense we feel of the loss which we, in common with the rest of the House, experience by the retirement from among us of Sir Erskine May. He has always been most kind and most courteous to us in giving that assistance which all of us at one time or another, as new Members of the House, have had to seek from him, and from the other authorities of the House. We regret deeply and sincerely that the state of Sir Erskine May's health prevents him from resuming his duties at the Table of the House; and we may trust that he may shortly be restored to somewhat of his former vigour and health. I believe, Sir, that the name of Sir Erskine May will be recorded hereafter among those who have most faithfully interpreted the precedents of the House, and have most carefully watched over its liberties.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

MR. SPEAKER: Agreed to, *nemine contradicente.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Standing Order No. 20, appointing the Committee of Supply to be the first Order of Friday, read.

Ordered, That the said Standing Order be suspended.

Ordered, That the Notice of Motion for leave to bring in a Bill relating to the Sale and Purchase of Land in Ireland have precedence of the Orders of the Day.—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

SALE AND PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I have now to ask the permission of the House to bring in a Bill to make amended provision for the sale and purchase of land in Ireland, and, in doing so, to complete the speech I began on Thursday last, which, inordinately long though it may have been, still remains unfinished. I use that language to describe, not any power that I know of binding on Parliament to treat these two questions as united questions—that must be a matter for the deliberation of Parliament—but to describe their union in my own mind and in the minds of my Colleagues.

Now, Sir, I stand rather peculiarly on the present occasion in the face of several sections of this House and of the people. As regards the Irish tenants, the proposal I have to make is one which, I think, undoubtedly may confer upon them a very great benefit. As regards the people of Ireland, distinct from the tenants, and considered in the mass, I think that will also be found to be the case. But the principal and the most immediate objects of the measure are the landlords, and I am going to ask the House of Commons to make a great effort—if I may say so, a serious and considerable effort—on behalf of the landlords of Ireland, whom I know to be generally most hostile to the policy which Her Majesty's Government is pursuing.

And I have likewise to take into view the fact that many of those who, far from being hostile, are most friendly to that policy, are likewise inclined to give a jealous reception—and I do not make that a matter of complaint—to the proposals I have to lay before the House. In entertaining a jealousy of that kind, in my opinion, they are only fulfilling their duty to the people at large. They have learnt that an effort is to be made in which either the money or the credit of the British Exchequer is to be made available on behalf of the Irish landlords, should the Irish landlords be disposed to accept that boon. I shall never draw a distinction—on the contrary, I would resist the drawing of any such distinction — between the money of the nation and the credit of the nation. The credit of the nation is just as precious as the money of the nation, and the same discretion should be exercised by the Representatives of the people in regard to the use of the one as to the expenditure of the other. I will explain, and I think I can make intelligible, the aspect in which we regard this great subject.

The aim and end of all our endeavours is not, in the first place, for its own sake, simply the contentment of the people in Ireland—it is the social order of the country. That is the first, the greatest, the most sacred, and the most necessary aim of every Government that knows its duty. We have sought, Sir, to come at that social order by means different from those hitherto employed, and we distinguish our course broadly from previous courses. The measures, by which we hope to administer to what is lacking in social order something in the nature of a permanent and effectual remedy, are twofold. In the first place, our petition, our request to the House, is that it will make arrangements for governing Ireland, in Irish matters, by Irish laws; and, in the second place, that it will undertake, not a partial, tentative, and timid touching of the Land Question, but a serious endeavour to settle it; for, Sir, as I have said, these questions are at the present moment, in our view, not to be separated one from the other, and of course, when I speak of these questions, I speak of the plan generally which the Government have formed, and I do not include, or attempt to press upon the House, every minute particular of that rather comprehensive and complex plan.

Now, Sir, I think that the argument that I have to make, and also the objections that I have to meet, divide themselves into these three heads. It would be demanded of me, in the first place, Must the land system of Ireland be settled? Why can you not leave it to be dealt with by the organ which you are asking Parliament to call into existence? This is the first question. Supposing that I am able to prove that an affirmative answer should be given to that inquiry, the next and not less natural question to be put by the representatives of the people, and, moreover, to be put to a certain extent in the tone and with the aspect of rejection, is, Must Great Britain be cumbered with this question? Well, Sir, I hope to show that it is an obligation of honour and of policy that Great Britain should undertake it. But I ask no assent to that proposition at present. Then, thirdly, I shall justly be asked, and I shall not attempt to shirk the inquiry, Are we to run pecuniary risks on the part of the English and Scottish people for the purpose of meeting this Irish want? I hope, Sir, as I meet the two former inquiries confidently with an affirmative answer, so I hope, in regard to the third, to establish not less strongly and clearly a negative reply. But I admit, without reservation, that upon my proof or non-proof of what I have now asserted, with regard to these three points, all depends as regards the case that I seek to make, and as regards the reception which the House, in my humble judgment, ought to give to that case.

The first question, then, is, Must the Land Question be dealt with? It is impossible for me, Sir, even if I draw largely on the indulgence of the House, to answer that question fully. It can only be answered fully by a careful study of the whole history of Ireland. I shall state the minimum of what appears to me to be necessary, and shall trust to the knowledge of hon. Members to fill up what may be lacking in my statement. Even the little that I shall state will probably be treated, and may possibly appear, as an indictment against the Irish landlords. Upon that subject I shall say, in few and summary words, it is an indictment against Irish landlords, against many in the past, against few, I hope, in the present. But although those upon whom censure ought to be pronounced may be few they have been the heirs of a sad inheritance. They have taken up, and been compelled to take up, dismal and deplorable traditions, and when oppression has wrought its very painful experience into the heart and mind of the people, it is not in a moment, not in a year, not in a generation, that the traces of that painful, of that dreadful process can be effaced.

I may perhaps refer to a case which, I think, is in point. In 1833 this House, to its great honour, its lasting fame, passed the Act for the emancipation of the negroes in the West Indies. It established a system which is known as apprenticeship, and which was intended to invest the negro population with all the rights of freedom, except the liability to render a certain carefully limited amount of labour for a carefully limited time. That law was, in general, peacefully received and faithfully obeyed; but a great philanthropist in this country, whose name should ever be held in honour—Mr. Joseph Sturge, of Birmingham—paid a visit to Jamaica, made inquiries for himself, by his own eyes and ears satisfied himself that in the case of certain estates in that Island there was a deliberate attempt to keep alive the spirit and the institutions of slavery under the guise of apprenticeship. He brought back the statement of that case to this country. It was never, I believe, asserted that this represented the general state of things in the West Indies, or probably even in Jamaica. But such was the impression produced by those few cases of horrible abuse and contumacious resistance to the will of Parliament, as well as to the dictates of humanity, that, after a struggle in this House, it was felt that the apprenticeship must at once, against the Parliamentary Covenant of 1833, be put an end to; and, accordingly, it reached an unexpected and immediate consummation. That I quote as an instance of the way in which the offences of the few may be visited upon the many. I have the honour of knowing myself many Irish landlords who are an honour to the class to which they belong. I hope that what I have said will show that, in quoting the mournful testimony of history, I do not seek to make them personally responsible for difficulties and for evils of which they are the victims rather than the cause.

I must go back to the origin of agrarian crime. Agrarian crime is the index of the difficulty with which I call upon the House to deal. Agrarian crime had an origin in Ireland. Speaking generally of the Celtic race as they live in Ireland, I believe a great and an almost inexhaustible patience has been one of their most remarkable characteristics. It was not among the Celts of Ireland that agrarian crime began. It was in a population—the population of Tipperary—dashed with a stronger and more vivacious blood that the spirit of resistance arose. I will take my description of the state of things in that crisis from a source which, if suspected of prepossession at all, cannot be suspected of prepossession, either too favourable to myself personally, or too favourable to the policy which we recommend. I am going to quote from the historical work of Mr. Froude known as *The English in Ireland.*

I think, when I refer to the mere name of that distinguished man, it shows that I am not seeking to avail myself unduly of the evidence of a witness who has prejudged the case in my favour. On that subject I may remind the House that it is the opinion of Mr. Froude that the right course for the British Government to pursue in the last century would have been to drop the Irish Parliament—that is, never to have summoned it—to appropriate what he terms the hereditary revenues, and to supply the annual deficit in the Irish Exchequer at the cost of the Treasury of England. Therefore, you cannot say that the man who proposes such an extinction of representative institutions in Ireland, and the substitution of what he meant to be a benevolent absolutism, is a man prepossessed in favour of the policy which we recommend. But Mr. Froude, although perhaps a man of prepossessions—on that I give no opinion—is certainly a man of truth and honour, and a man who, if he sees what he believes to be injustice, will not allow his heart and his conscience to tamper with the principles involved in exposing it.

What says Mr. Froude as to the condition of the Irish peasantry before the outbreak of agrarian crime? In the second volume of that work, and on page 20, he compares the condition of the Irish cultivator as it had then become with what it had been under his own native Chiefs; and Mr. Froude says—

> "To four-fifths of the Irish peasantry the change of masters meant only a grinding tyranny, and tyranny the more unbearable, because inflicted by aliens in blood and creed. Under their own Chiefs they had been miserable, but they were suffering at least at the hands of their natural Sovereigns"—

and here I may say I believe that of his natural Sovereign the Irishman is by nature inclined to think much—

> "and the clansman who bore his lord's name, and if harshly used by his own master, was protected by him against others, could not feel himself utterly without a friend. But the oppression of the peasantry in the last century was not even the oppression of a living man—it was the oppression of a system. The peasant of Tipperary was in the grasp of a dead hand. The will of a master whom he never saw was enforced against him by a law irresistible as destiny. The absentee landlords of Ireland had neither community of interest with the people nor sympathy of race. They had no fear of provoking their resentment for they lived beyond their reach. They had no desire for their welfare, for, as individuals, they were ignorant of their existence. They regarded their Irish estates as the sources of their income; their only desire was to extract the most out of them which the soil could be made to yield; and they cared no more for the souls and the bodies of those who were in fact committed to their charge than the owners of a West Indian plantation for the herds of slaves whose backs were blistering in the cane fields."

That was the state of things which attended the origin of agrarian crime in 1760; and from that date its continuance has been uninterrupted, with a terrible facility, from time to time, of expansion to alarming dimensions—nay, more, with a facility and a power of developing itself to the harm of England. I will read a few more words from Mr. Froude on this subject. He shows with what fatal force there came upon Ireland at that period a combination of symptoms grouped together for the misery of the land. In the first place, owing to the increased demand of England for animal food, there was the conversion of the small holdings into large grazing farms. In the second place, owing to the same cause, there was the withdrawal, from the tenants, of the hill pastures, which were traditionally enjoyed by them as accompaniments of their small arable possessions and holdings. There was the constant raising of the rents, and there was a progressive and rapid increase of absenteeism. And Mr. Froude says on this subject, in a passage shorter than that which I have just read—

> "Many causes had combined at that moment to exasperate the normal irritation of the Southern peasantry."

And presently he goes on to show that that irritation was not confined to the Southern peasantry:—

> "With the growth of what was called civilization, absenteeism, the worst disorder of the country, had increased. In Charles II.'s time the absentees were few or none. But the better Irish gentleman were educated, and the more they knew of the rest of the world the less agreeable they found Ireland and Irish manners; while the more they separated themselves from their own estates, the more they increased their rents to support the cost of living elsewhere."

Sir, that is the account given by Mr. Froude. I leave the House to appreciate its weight.

What else have we to take into account? The Irish Parliament, although at that time its independence had not been acknowledged, was alive and active, and was displaying, in numerous controversies between Ireland and England, a real if a narrow patriotism. But I must distinguish broadly between the Irish Parliament—which I rejoice to commend where that can be done—between the Irish Parliament on questions of nationality, and the Irish Parliament on questions of class. The Irish Parliament was hostile to absenteeism, for absentees were essentially anti-national. The Irish Parliament did not struggle to do justice to the tenant. It was a Parliament partly of pensioners, partly of placemen, and the rest of landlords. The Irish Parliament did nothing to mitigate the evil, and if it be true that there were fresh Coercion Acts passed from year to year that deplorable fact only strengthens the statement I make, and shows how the sad and dread mischief of agrarian crime took root in the country.

Sir, in the varied incidents of social life there are unhappily many marriages which are barren, and many families which die out; but there is one marriage that is never without issue. When oppression on the one hand is married to misery on the other, then there springs from the union a fatal and a hideous progeny of crime; and that crime is endowed with a vitality that perpetuates itself, and hands on the baleful and miserable inheritance from generation to generation. That is the case of absenteeism in Ireland—that is the case of the rooted tendency to crime which springs from causes most disgraceful to those who were charged with the government of Ireland and the care of its population—most disgraceful to them, and most perplexing and embarrassing to us. One other circumstance tending further to complicate the case has to be added to those that I have already enumerated. The struggle connected with the agrarian relations between landlord and tenant has continued, and has even been, until very lately, seriously aggravated. The differences of religion down to the year 1829 were the basis of an odious political system, and traces of them, unfortunately, survived that period. The one point of union that there was between the Irish landlord and his tenant, that sentiment of nationality which the old Irish Parliament never lost, has, I am sorry say, since the Union greatly ceased to operate—ceased to form a bond of connection between those classes—ceased to have a mitigating and beneficial influence on Irish life.

Now, after what I have said—after the fearful exasperation which has been introduced into these agrarian relations —into agrarian relations, which are the determining elements of Irish society and Irish life—after the long continuance of the mischief, so that it has become chronic in the system and forms part of the habits of the people, we arrive at the conclusion that it would be an ill-intended and an ill-shapen kindness to any class in Ireland to hand over to an Irish Legislature, as its first introduction to the work that it may have to perform, the business of dealing with the question of the land. It would be like giving over to Ireland the worst part of her feuds, and confronting her with the necessity for efforts which would possibly be hopeless, but which, at any rate, would be attended with the most fearful risks.

And now I come to my second question. I have shown you how terrible the subject of the land is in itself. I come to my second question—Why is Great Britain to be cumbered with this subject? Are we bound to cumber ourselves with it? Is it an obligation of policy and a dictate of honour? I am satisfied that the House, however reluctant—it cannot be more reluctant than we are—if it be an obligation of policy, if it be a dictate of honour, and still more if it be partly the one and partly the other, will not shrink from any duty which these considerations may entail. Why, then, are we to cumber Great Britain with an endeavour to settle this question, which is no slight task?

Well, Sir, I wish to point out that the obligation on our part has been admitted already — admitted in a partial form, but in a form which I believe this House, certainly the Party opposite, and perhaps many Gentlemen on this side, have shown a disposition to enlarge—namely, the form of our existing Land Purchase Acts. I consider that these Acts present an extremely bad and dangerous form of dealing with this obligation, and I do so on this ground—that their basis is to place the British Treasury in contact with the individual occupier and farmer in Ireland. In our opinion, Sir, that is not a wise policy. I do not entertain a mistrust of the Irishman's disposition to liquidate his pecuniary engagements. I believe that he may very well—excepting under circumstances of peculiar exasperation—bear comparison with his competitors in other countries in that matter. But it is a dangerous thing for a State, which the course of policy and the condition of legislation have led the people to regard as essentially a foreign State, to make those people in great numbers individually its debtors; dangerous because tempting the debtor, dangerous because extremely unsafe for the State considered as the creditor.

I may name another consideration, which is not one of honour but of prudence. We have struggled to introduce into the Irish Government Bill what are called safeguards for the minority, without, I admit, obtaining the smallest mitigation from our adversaries of their opposition. Acting on the same principle—and, if I may allow myself to use hallowed words in no jesting spirit, "walking by faith and not by sight," we desire, by exhibiting the utmost consideration for the imperilled class—or, at any rate, for the class impressed deeply with fear and apprehension, the Irish landlords—to do everything on their behalf which duty will allow us to do. If such proposals should produce a mitigating effect, it might lead to an easier and speedier concession to Ireland of what we know to be her demand, and what we believe to be her rights, and if not, still we have done our best, and we must leave the issue to a higher power.

Now, Sir, what are the substantial reasons—those that I have mentioned are collateral considerations—what are the substantial reasons why, as we think, it is the absolute duty of Great Britain to make herself a party in this matter to the extent, at least, of a just offer and a fair opportunity to be given to the Irish landlords? Well, I sum them up in one word. We cannot wash ourselves clean and clear of the responsibility. The deeds of the Irish landlords are to a great extent our deeds. We are *participes criminis;* we, with power in our hands, looked on; we not only looked on, but we encouraged and sustained.

I think it is a hard case, if I may be permitted to say so, for my fellow Representatives of Scotland. The hardest case in this matter is the case of the Scotch people, for England had the blessing in the 18th century of a representative system, which, if not perfect, yet, as we know from great occasions like that of 1783, and like that of 1831, did suffice to bring to the front a strong national sentiment. Scotland had no such system. I think that 4,000 or 5,000 persons had in their hands as voters the entire representation of the whole of Scotland, and they had in their hands the representation of the Scotch people. The Scotch people had, therefore, had no responsibility for the dreadful history of the relations between Great Britain and Ireland.

I must speak of the Imperial Parliament in which Scotland was not allowed to exercise any national or popular influence. I have said that the landlords were our garrison in Ireland. Let me a little unfold that sentence. We planted them there, and we replanted them. In 1641, in 1688, and again in 1798, we reconquered the country for them. I heard a hon. and gallant Gentleman speak a few nights ago in this House, who seemed to be under the pious impression that rebellion in Ireland had been put down by the superhuman action of a certain regiment of Militia—I really forgot which. I beg pardon of my old supporter, but speaking with all respect for his ability as a speaker, his frankness, uprightness, and the integrity of his whole intention, if he has read the history of the rebellion of 1641 he will find that it was effectually and finally put down, and only put down, by Cromwell, who, whatever he may have been, was not an Irish Protestant. The rebellion of 1688-9 was put down not by the Protestants of the North, but by the introduction mainly of foreign hosts; and the rebellion of 1798, to which I think the hon. and gallant Member specially referred, was unquestionably put down, not by the action of what is termed the loyal minority, which undoubtedly—I do not say from its own fault—had not at that period earned the name; but when the Irish Government in Dublin was in despair, the rebellion was put down by their inducing the British Government in London to equip and send to Ireland a large and adequate force of British soldiers.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): They had the Yeomanry.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: No doubt they had the Yeomanry, but the Yeomanry could not do it.

Well, Sir, we have more responsibility than that. We used the whole civil government of Ireland as an engine of wholesale corruption, and we extended that corruption to what ought to have been a sacred thing—namely, the Church which we maintained and supported in the land. We did everything in our power to irritate and to exasperate the Irish people by the whole of that policy. Then came 1795, the brightest period of the history of the Irish Parliament under the Lord Lieutenancy of Lord Fitzwilliam, when, through the sentiment of nationality, that Parliament was about to do for Ireland what would have given to it the seed of every promise of happiness and prosperity, beginning with the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, a measure that would have led by a chain of links that could not have been broken to Parliamentary reform and the admission of the people to political power. But we took Lord Fitzwilliam away. They strove to keep him, but England would not let them. What then? We brought about the Union. I have avoided that subject because I did not want to enter into the details of it. It is dreadful to read the language of Lord Cornwallis and the disgust of an honourable mind at the transactions in which he found himself under the painful necessity of engaging. I will only say that we obtained that Union against the sense of every class of the community by wholesale bribery and unblushing intimidation.

Then came the more direct responsibility of the British Parliament. Did things greatly mend under that? Have hon. Members considered the Act of 1816 and its effect upon the Irish tenant? Notwithstanding all other changes there had lingered in Ireland a state of law determining the condition of the tenure of the soil which was of such a nature as practically to protect the tenant in something like a real fixity of tenure. The inefficiency of the remedies had been such that they had allowed the tenants still to dream of something of the old tribal usages, and that something of the old tribal permanence remained. But in the united Parliament was brought in an Act, introduced, as Mr. Leslie Foster, a first-rate authority, said, because by the law, as it then stood, the tenant was enabled to set his landlord absolutely at defiance. All these protections were swept away. I do not enter into the merits of the proceedings. All I am now saying is that they were not likely to reconcile the Irish occupier to his lot, or to root out agrarian crime from the soil. Such was 1816. There is, in my judgment, worse to come. We lingered until 1843, when we come to the time of the Devon Report—a Conservative Report issued under the auspices of a Conservative Ministry. I might read many passages from that Report, but I will read only one, and that not a long one. It is as follows:—

> "A reference to the evidence of most of the witnesses will show that the agricultural labourer of Ireland continues to suffer the greatest privations and hardships; that he continues to depend upon casual and precarious employments for his subsistence; that he is still badly housed, badly fed, badly clothed, and badly paid for his labour. Our personal experience and observation during our inquiry have afforded us a melancholy confirmation of these statements, and we cannot forbear expressing our strong sense of the patient endurance."

Now, mind that; as I have stated, the Devon Commission was a Conservative Commission, yet still it is most struck by the patient endurance by which the Irish tenant and occupier sustained his lot. [An hon. MEMBER: Labourer.] I believe that is possible. I have not the Report here. The phrase is "labouring classes"; I believe it means the man who labours upon his land.

LORD JOHN MANNERS: And who works for wages?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes, undoubtedly, because the great bulk of these people, half the Irish population, are partly dependent upon wages. However, for fear there should be anything in that objection, on the next occasion I will bring down a stronger passage. This Commission then expresses its strong sense "of the patient endurance which the labouring classes"—that is, not the labourers alone—the enormous majority at that time of the Irish agricultural tenants belonged to the labouring classes—

> "Have generally exhibited under sufferings, greater we believe than the people of any other country of Europe have to sustain."

That is the description given at a period when we were maintaining a Corn Law, for which we boasted that the justification was to be found in the higher level at which it kept our labouring population. That is the Report of the Devon Commission. It does not end there. Passages like this were not overlooked by men of the stamp of Sir Robert Peel, and the late Lord Derby in the House of Lords introduced a Bill to give effect to the most important recommendations of the Devon Commission. Had that Bill been passed, much of the subsequent history might have been modified or changed. The House of

Lords, as we know, usually accepts with great facility the recommendations of a Tory Government; but this recommendation of a Tory Government for the improvement of the condition of the occupiers and the agricultural population of Ireland was too much for the patience and political loyalty of the House of Lords. The next effort was that of Mr. Napier, a Gentleman sitting on that side of the House. That Bill was lost also. The mischief did not stop there; we produced the Encumbered Estates Bill, with a general, lazy, uninformed, and irreflective good intention of taking capital to Ireland. What did we do by that Bill? We sold the improvements of the tenants. The tenant lost his old landlord, who was in many cases an easy-going personage, and had oftentimes established a *modus vivendi* with his tenant, who was handed over to a horde of new proprietors, who were told that they might exact a greater rental from the tenant, and who took, in the form of rent, that which was the produce of the tenant's labour. That Bill took away the last mitigation of the case of the Irish peasant; it took it away through a deplorable error of uninformed, and, I must say, irreflective benevolence.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: It was taken away by Lord Russell.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I beg pardon. The noble Lord's information is always interesting, but sometimes partial. I would say that the Act was suggested to Lord Russell.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: It was passed by Lord Russell.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: But, Sir, I am speaking of this House. I have not said a word against the noble Lord's Party, or the noble Lord's principles, if I knew what his principles were. I am speaking of this House, and I claim no exemption for any great Party in this House. Many distinctions may be drawn in respect to the treatment of the Land Question at that period; I am not aware that any distinction can be drawn in respect of Party. It is the fact that this was not the action of a Party, but the action of a Parliament, and that is why I ask this House whether, after even such a summary recital as I have given, it is possible to deny that the landlords have been our garrison, and our representatives; that we have relied upon them as they have relied upon us; and that we cannot wash our hands of responsibility for their doings, or for the consequences of those doings.

We acknowledged—I admit in a different way—our concern in the case of the landlords by the Acts of 1870 and 1881. Lord Russell, who was alive at the passing of the first of these Acts, was among its cordial supporters. But I will not dwell upon that subject; it is beside my argument. At that time we modified, most essentially, the condition of the landlords, and as we did so there arises an obligation from different sources, but tending to the same point—namely, that, in my opinion, Great Britain, within the limits of reason, cannot refuse to be cumbered with this important question of the Irish landlords.

Having proceeded so far, I have still one important matter to argue—namely, the third of the questions which I put. It is an important inquiry—whether I am proposing to inflict a pecuniary risk upon the people of England and Scotland. But I think I have now reached a point at which, before dealing with the third question, I ought to explain to the House the scheme which we are about to submit.

I shall have a great number of points to mention; I will therefore mention them in the most summary manner, and I will beforehand endeavour to impress upon hon. Members that, although I will do my best under circumstances which have been those of some haste and difficulty—yet I am strongly impressed with the belief that it will not be possible for them to acquire any adequate idea of this measure except by a close inspection of the Bill itself, which we are using every effort to place at the earliest moment in their hands. Even as single provisions, some of them perhaps may be difficult to understand; but bearing as these provisions do one upon the other, I am confident it would be impossible to appreciate them except in the manner I have suggested.

The Act will take effect on the same day with the Irish Government Act. As we think it our duty to press for the passing of this Act with the Irish Government Act, so undoubtedly we provide in the Bill itself that it is not to pass without the Irish Government Act. Secondly, the Legislative Body in Dublin may appoint any person or body to be what is called under the Act the State Authority.

I shall refer again to that phrase, which is used in the Act in various important relations. Thirdly, the purchases under the Act are to be made in a Three per Cent Stock, issued on the application, probably of the Land Commission, to the Treasury, and under regulations to be made by the Treasury.

This Three per Cent Stock will, in all likelihood, be what is termed the New Three per Cents. The most obvious name that occurs to everyone is the name of Consols. But the amount of the New Three per Cent Stock is £180,000,000, quite sufficient to insure extensive dealings, and it so happens that the mass of Irish dealings in the Stocks is in the denomination of Three per Cents. I think the comparison is between £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 for Consols, and £25,000,000 or £27,000,000—I forget which—for the New Three per Cents, and therefore it is probable that that Stock will be most convenient for Irish holders. The Stock, of course, is to be issued at par; it may suit the convenience of parties and the Treasury to commute it to a Stock of a lower denomination, and that may be done with the consent of the Treasury. If it so happen that, under the necessary limitations of the Act, Stock cannot be issued to vendors forthwith, scrip, at the same rate of interest, will be given to them in anticipation. These are general, but still not unimportant, provisions.

Now, Sir, I will describe in a very few words what I may term the substance and purpose of the Act. I will avoid that trap into which it seems I fell the other night about "essential" and "vital" points. It is not difficult to say what are the principal enactments; it is extremely difficult, especially in the early stage of discussion, to say what is vital and what is not. It is very difficult indeed, and in consequence, I suppose, of its being so difficult, it is never done. I am not aware that I ever heard of a great measure introduced with a thorough-going attempt to separate its enactments into two classes, and to say one of them is vital and you cannot touch them, and the other is non-vital and you may do with them what you please. I will not attempt that; but I think I will use words which will give to hon. Members a sufficient idea of the sense and spirit of the measure, and enable them to judge what are really its main provisions.

The object of this Act is to give to all Irish landowners the option of being bought out on the terms of the Act; to give to all Irish landowners an opening towards the exercise of that option. I will show later on what portion of them can exercise it, if they like, under the terms of this particular Act; but the policy is a policy which is to be distinctly understood as the policy of giving this option to all Irish landowners as regards their rented land, and such lands with certain exceptions, which I will state more particularly, as may be described by the word agricultural. As a general description, please to take that for the present moment. I wish it to be understood that the Act has no concern whatever with mansions, demesnes, or with woods as commonly understood; and I, for my part—I may be very, very sanguine, but I am in hopes that many a nobleman and many a gentleman in Ireland will long continue to inhabit his mansion and his demesne in a new and a happier state of things; yes, I believe it may be possible that even the Irish Nationalists may desire that those marked out by leisure, wealth, and station for attention to public duties, and for the exercise of influence, may become, in no small degree, the natural, and effective, and safe leaders of the people.

Sir, the spirit in which we have drawn this Act I wish also to be understood. You may construe enactments perhaps in different ways; but the spirit in which we have drawn the present measure is that of making on this great occasion—the use or the rejection of which evidently must have important influences on the future course of the question—the spirit in which we have drawn it is that of making the most liberal offer to the Irish landlords that we believe our obligations to them demand, or even justify, or that we can expect the Representatives of the people to accept. I come one step nearer to my point, and I will endeavour to give a three-fold indication which will be useful in following the leading provisions of the Act.

The groundwork of the Act is an option to the landlords. Upon that I will only say that we have considered much with regard to an option to the tenants; and, again, with regard to including in the Act provisions, like those of the present Land Purchase Acts, for contemplating voluntary arrangements. I do not say that these are necessarily to be rejected; but we have not seen our way to incorporating them with this measure. The measure, as we have found it our duty to present it, is founded on the landlord's option to sell. The State Authority, as I have described it—that is, an organ representing the Irish Legislative Bodies—is to be the middle term, instead of the Treasury, between the vendor and the occupier. It is through that medium that the transaction is to take place. And, lastly, as a general rule, what we propose is that upon the sale the peasant is to become the proprietor. He is not to be, in our view, as a general rule, an occupier subject to rent-charge, or subject to be dealt with by anyone as such until the expiration of a certain term, when he is to become the proprietor; but he is to become the proprietor at once, except that he is to be subject to a burden which I will presently describe.

As to the nature of the transaction, the State Authority is to be the purchaser, and the occupier is to become the proprietor. There are exceptions. It has appeared that it might not be well in all cases to force the very smallest occupiers to become proprietors, if, for any particular reasons, it did not suit their condition. At any rate, we do not compel the tenant at £4 and under to become a proprietor unless he wishes it.

There is another more important exception. Everyone knows the great importance in Ireland of what are called congested districts. These congested districts we propose to deal with in a manner which forms an exception to the general rule. In the congested districts we propose that the State Authority should be not merely the vehicle through which the purchase is to be effected and carried on to the tenant; but in these congested districts, which we propose to schedule at a certain time in the Bill, the State Authority is to be the proprietor.

I am bound to say that we reserve for further consideration the question whether in these districts, and these only, there should be introduced the power of compulsory expropriation of landlords—voluntary expropriation with regard to the landlords being the general basis of this Bill.

What are commonly known as encumbrances, and what are commonly known in Ireland as public burdens, in which phrase, if I am rightly informed, rates are not usually comprehended, are to be taken over from the selling landlord, and he is entirely discharged from them as a matter of arrangement in the transaction. The mortgages, of course, constitute a very easy portion of the transaction. The more difficult part of the transaction is in the quit rent and the head rent, the jointures and miscellaneous payments. But we feel it necessary for many reasons to disembarrass the estate of these, and likewise of public burdens, such as the tithes commutation, because otherwise we should be in the difficulty of having the tithes commutation liability divided among a multitude of small holdings, which would be highly inconvenient, if not impracticable. The State Authority will take over encumbrances of this character —I do not mean encumbrances in capital sums; but, speaking generally, encumbrances in the form of annual charge— will take them over either with the option of continuing to pay them, or to redeem them upon the terms which are stated in the Bill.

Then comes a rather important provision. No one, as a general rule, will have the option to sell except the immediate landlord, our object being a political and social object, dealing with the heart and root of the difficulty. It is to him that we give this option, in order to bring about relief from the dilemma. But his encumbrancer—that is, the mortgagee—will not, by foreclosing, be able to acquire the option for himself. There are certain provisions which provide for cases where the interest of the immediate landlord is extremely small, and the principal interest in the property is in the superior landlord. I only mention this as an exception, which I will not attempt to explain at present. So much for the general nature of the transaction.

Now we come to the application which is to be made. The first condition is this—the application must, as a general rule, be for the whole of the tenanted estate. I can conceive nothing more grossly unjust to the landlord than to tear his property into rags by arbitrary provisions, and therefore the rule is that the application must be for an integral estate, and the Land Court or Commission will determine what is one estate. But there are two exceptions to which I ought to refer. One is the case of the grazings. The great grazings in Ireland appear to stand in a very different condition from that of most agricultural property. We leave it open to either party to apply the definition of an agricultural holding contained in the Act of 1881, and exclude these grazings from the transaction. The other is that it is impossible to say in the measure what sort of villages ought, and what ought not, to be included in the Act. In cases where the village is purely subservient to the agricultural purposes of the estate, it ought to be included in the expropriation. In many cases there may may be a village which has other shades of character, or is even essentially different, and that question we treat as exceptional, and leave to be determined by the Land Commission. Now, Sir, the next proposition is that town parks will not be included in the Bill. So far as we can judge they do not belong to the same category. All the applications received are to be registered, and are to rank according to priority. The persons making the application must give security to pay the costs if it be not completed into a binding transaction; and in certain cases the Land Commission is to be intrusted with the power of refusing to entertain the application.

Now, Sir, I speak to hon. Gentlemen many of whom are better acquainted, more minutely acquainted, than I am with the agricultural circumstances of Ireland, and I believe I am right in saying that there is a certain class of estates in Ireland—I will not go the whole length with that eminent authority, Sir James Caird, on a recent occasion—that there is a certain class of estates of which the real, substantial, natural value, is, from various circumstances, so depressed that it would be impossible to put a scale of years in the Act which would really reach them. We should have to go so low that it might introduce great uncertainty in the general character of the Bill. With regard to these, we thought the best thing we could do was to empower the Land Commission to refuse an application in these exceptional cases if it deems it inequitable that the State Authority should be required to buy an estate at the price laid down in the Act.

Now, Sir, I come still nearer to the centre of gravity of the Act. The basis on which we compute the price to be paid to the outgoing landlord is twofold. First of all, it must be taken on the rental at a certain time, subject to certain conditions; and, secondly, it must be taken in a certain number of years' purchase on that rental. Our basis is to be the net rental; and the net rental is to be ascertained—I have spoken already of the public burdens—by deducting the rates and the outgoings. In the outgoings I include law charges, bad debts, and management. These are the great heads. There are minor heads where particular arrangements have been made, and to these I need not refer. The time upon which the calculation is to be based must be a recent one. We have, therefore, thought it best to take a year the selection of which would give no encouragement to any artificial action or agitation with a view to illegitimately influencing the standard of rental. The general idea, therefore, would be that it would be for a rental due in the year ending November, 1885; the judicial rental, where there is one, to be adopted as the standard of gross rental. Where there is no judicial rental, we are in greater difficulty, and we introduce a provision which enables the Land Court, if it shall see cause, to take a given district of Ireland—probably an electoral division — to take the judicial rents within that division, to take Griffith's valuation within that division, to see the relation between the judicial rents and Griffith's valuation, and to use that relation as a guide in determining what shall be the standard rental which is to be the basis of the transaction.

We have also provided, Sir, in order to get over the difficulties connected with the great fluctuations in payments and prices, that the Land Court shall examine the books of the estate. That may sound to Gentlemen not conversant with Irish transactions a cumbrous arrangement. But we have extremely able public servants in Ireland conversant with these transactions affecting the land, and we are assured by them, without the least doubt or hesitation, that the examination of the books will be not only a practicable, but the best and by far the most practicable, method of deciding the important question of amount. Those books ought to be examined over a considerable time in order to meet the difficulty which arises out of agricultural fluctuations, and we propose to fix the time at 10 years. So much as to the rental.

Now as to the years' purchase. We propose, Sir, that the normal rate, if I may so call it—that is, the rate which we conceive will be applicable on a fairly well-conditioned estate in Ireland—setting apart exceptional cases—both of the few extremely good and valuable, and I am afraid the more numerous class that will fall below that—the normal rate would be 20 years on the basis of the rental which I have described. I must add some important particulars of explanation. An addition may be made to the sum on which the charge will be founded in the case of arrears coming due after November, 1885, when it is shown to the satisfaction of the Land Commission that every attempt has been made to collect them, and that it has not been found practicable. An addition may be made to the 20 years in the case of exceptionally good estates, limited, however, by a maximum of 22 years. It is still more necessary that there should be a power to effect a decrease from the 20 years, and it is not possible to attach a fixed limit to that decrease, because if we were to give a fixed limit we must found it on the farthest case to which it ought to go, and that would imply so considerable a deduction that I think it would shake the confidence and tend to pervert the general impression as to the main aim of the Act, which is a normal standard of 20 years.

I will illustrate my meaning. This power of deduction I will thus define. It would have by no means an exclusive reference, but a somewhat special reference to small holdings. As regards estates composed principally of small holdings, in the considerable majority of cases, even after making the deductions, they are less valuable than estates which are not made up of holdings so small. But, again, if you were to attempt to meet that, as we thought at one time, by naming a more limited number of years for holdings under certain rates, we should fall into an error, because there are estates, particularly in Ulster, which are made up in a great degree of small holdings, but which are, nevertheless, of extremely good, sound, general repute. For that reason we leave this power of distinction in the hands of the Land Commission. I think, Sir, that is the end of the general provisions of the Act which I ought to mention, with the important exception as to the mode in which we are to find the money.

I come then, Sir, to the third question which I stated to the House. The House has a right to ask me and to ask the Government—"You confess that you are going to make use of the public credit; do you intend, under this Bill, that the country is to undertake a real pecuniary risk, and that Parliament is to be requested to compromise its duties as guardians of the public Treasury and of the public credit?" My answer, Sir, is twofold. In the first place, in my opinion the introduction of a plan founded on the basis I now propose of building upon the responsibility of an Irish State Authority, will not increase, but will greatly diminish the public risk—that public risk which is inseparable from the condition of the Treasury when it comes to be the creditor of perhaps hundreds of thousands of tenants in Ireland. Observe that you cannot have an extensive plan in Ireland without being prepared to deal with tenants in hundreds of thousands. Therefore I distinctly plead to the House that this Bill, if passed, will not be an increase, but will be a diminution of public responsibility.

I do not hesitate to say that it will be a grief to me that I can never dismiss from my mind if, at the end of a very long life, much of which has been devoted to a guardianship—perhaps very ineffectual, but still with the best attention I could give—of the public Treasury and of the public credit, I should submit to Parliament a measure founded upon opposite principles, or a measure to which we had not ourselves applied the most jealous scrutiny with a view to obtaining what I will not hesitate to call an absolute security.

The risk which the public might have to undergo would be twofold. We are proceeding upon a basis of not making loans in the market to meet the Irish demand, but of issuing Stocks. There are two things, therefore, to be considered. First of all, the certainty of the repayment of the money; but that is not the only question. The other thing is the effect of our issues upon the general credit and the general condition of the public security. I not only do not deprecate, but I invite scrutiny of the Bill when printed in relation to both these subjects.

The proposals we make, Sir, are these. Of course, one of our great difficulties in this business is that neither we nor any human authority can determine beforehand whether the offer—the great offer, signal and conspicuous—which is now made will be accepted universally, largely, or at all. We are obliged to make the best calculation or conjecture that we can. It is quite necessary to make an attempt on what may fairly be called, in reference to ordinary transactions, a large scale. That proposition we accept. Notices coming in will be, of course, limited to certain times. The State cannot remain subject to a perpetual recurrence of proceedings lying so far out of the ordinary road, and the Act will prescribe strictly the notices which may be given and the transactions—issues of public Stocks to meet them—which may take place in pursuance of those notices. In respect of the notices which may be given in the financial year 1887-8, we propose to authorize the issue, as a maximum, of £10,000,000 of Stock, because we assume that, although the notices of that year may be very numerous, if the Act works largely, yet the transactions to be concluded in it cannot by any means be so abundant, for these transactions evidently cannot be carried through in a day, and you cannot have an innumerable army of official persons to carry them through. Therefore, we authorize an issue of £10,000,000 for the notices given in 1887-8, a further issue of £20,000,000 to meet notices in or before the year 1888-9, and a further issue of £20,000,000 for notices in or before 1889-90. That will give a total of Stock issuable at par, under the Act, amounting to £50,000,000 should it be called for. The operative portion of the Act, the House will feel, must be provided for, because no notices will be given under the powers of the Act after March 31, 1890.

But the House will understand with reference to what I described as the second kind of risk which we have to keep in view that it would not have done for us to say that the purchase may be effected to the extent of £50,000,000, and leave it a matter of chance when the Stock shall be issued. We must consider carefully what amount of Stock we can undertake to issue within the 12 months, and, at the same time, maintain a reasonable amount of confidence that we shall not by that issue unfavourably affect the general price and credit of securities. This point I consider of very great importance. It is necessary for us to maintain the very high level of the price of the public securities. I would even say, setting apart the extraordinary casualties and combinations of circumstances which no man can predict, it is necessary that we should maintain them at something not very far from the level where they now are, and where they have been for a considerable time. Therefore I may be justly asked, Do you think that £20,000,000 is the amount which in one year you may venture to fix as the limit, and yet feel confident in maintaining your price?

Now, Sir, that is a question which 30 or 40 years ago it would have been impossible to answer in the affirmative, because the powers of Parliament for purchasing Stock were so limited that, when even a second-rate purchase was necessary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had no option but to go hat in hand to the Bank of England or lesser authorities to see what they could do for him. I am able to say now, however, that on our own account we are in a condition under the normal and regular action of the Acts relating to the disposal of Exchequer deposits and banking deposits at the command of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to exercise so large a power of purchase in the Stock Market as effectually to counteract any abnormal depression which might otherwise be threatened by the fact that many of those who may acquire a considerable proportion of Stocks under the Act will be desirous to exchange them for others perhaps not quite so stable, but at the same time more lucrative. I think I can give that assurance to the House with considerable confidence after having made it a subject of careful inquiry among those who have the largest experience and the greatest faculty of determining what is the point to which we may safely go.

I am evidently open to an important observation. I have said that our policy embraces in its final scope—if they desire to avail themselves of the opportunity—embraces in its final scope all Irish landlords. I am bound to express my hope that a good many Irish landlords, not on pecuniary and fiscal grounds only, but upon moral, social, and political grounds, are in such a position that they will not dream of availing themselves of it in its final scope. I am prepared to say that what we contemplate is that every man who desires to avail himself of it shall have a fair opportunity of doing so. It is evident from what is known of the value of Irish landed property, if we go to its total falling within the definition of the Act, it would certainly exceed, to a very considerable extent, not £50,000,000, but £100,000,000; I will not say how much, but very considerably. We do not know what fraction we might safely cut off as the proportion of those who under no circumstances would be likely to exercise the option; but it is obvious that a transaction of that kind, if acted upon to that extent, would not be covered by the final issue. When we commenced first drawing the rudimentary sketch the dominant idea in our minds naturally was to redeem fully the constructive promise we made to the Irish landlords. Therefore, I certainly thought at the first moment to put in the Bill a larger figure as the sum upon which I founded the computation of what might be provided. That figure was not £50,000,000, but so much as £113,000,000. That was the computation on which I founded the figures which I first brought before my Colleagues. Two of those Colleagues, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), in particular, felt jealous of charging the public for Irish land or charging it to that great extent. To their objections I certainly feel indebted for what I think a great improvement in the Bill. Because, although there is no change whatever in the policy of the Government, I certainly have to thank them for having set me to consider more carefully what is the relation between an Executive Government asking an advance of that description from Parliament and Parliament charged with the responsibility of maintaining the public credit.

I am not ashamed of saying that this plan is not a plan which sprang up in the brain fully armed at a moment's notice. I have told the House of the extraordinary and unprecedented difficulties under which it has been framed, amid the pressure of Parliamentary Business from day to day, and I am very glad to own any assistance which has been given to me. It is very pleasant to me to make it known to my Colleagues as regarding this question that I had the means of bridging over very considerably such difficulties as might exist between us. The matter never came, strictly speaking, to an issue between us. Now hon. Gentlemen may think that I have no real or substantial reason for making this reduction except what might be called meeting a popular outcry. Quite the reverse. Unquestionably it was our duty to consider the probability of the acceptance of the measure. But we had many other considerations, and I must say that, upon considerations quite apart from difficulties in procuring the acceptance of the measure, I arrived at the deliberate conviction that it would have been a great error on our part to ask at this moment, now, at once, for a sum founded upon anything like an outside estimate of the possibilities of the case. I felt we ought to ask from Parliament what would secure an efficient progress of the measure, if it became really an operative measure, but that we ought to reserve to Parliament after we had reached that limit an opportunity of exercising its discretion afresh.

Hon. Gentlemen must have seen that, so far as we are concerned, there are some things which I have said which may be considered to be in the nature of pledges of good faith as between us and the landlords. To make this offer, to make it in an efficient shape, and with the intention so far as we are concerned of following it up if necessary, I conceive it to be a matter of honour and good faith; but there are a multitude of other conditions and considerations affecting the future Irish Authority, conditions affecting the Irish tenant, conditions affecting the Money Market, and the nature of those issues which are not matters of good faith even for us, but are more or less, though by no means generally or universally, matters of good faith, matters of good policy and expediency. From my point of view, I conceive that it is quite right, in an arrangement of this kind, that we should secure to Parliament an opportunity of exercising its judgment afresh on the subject we now submit to it. So far as good faith is concerned, I am quite certain of this—that if Parliament accedes to and accepts this particular Bill, if it finds that the promises under which we commend the Bill are fulfilled, if it finds that public credit is duly maintained, if it finds that repayments are duly made, if it finds that the whole complex machinery is so well oiled that it works like a locomotive, and if the public credit is safe, as we are sure it will be, in my opinion Parliament will never under-estimate the moral obligations that may be comprehended in the subject. Therefore, Sir, this proposal, subject to the declarations which I have not scrupled to make, is in a manner so far experimental that the discretion of Parliament upon its particulars will be reserved.

But then I shall be asked, perhaps, how these repayments are to be secured. They are to be secured in a manner which I commend to Parliament as simple, as effective, and as warranted by the circumstances of the case. It is proposed that there shall be appointed a Receiver General under British authority, who shall not levy rents or other revenues in Ireland, but through whose hands all rents and all Irish revenues whatsoever must pass before a shilling of them can be applied to any Irish purpose whatever. It is necessary for the Irish Authority, if it is to govern Ireland, to have funds for the purpose. Under the plans we propose, and with the economies which I have not the least doubt they will make, I believe their funds will be ample and abundant; but what we propose is this—that these funds shall be subject to the discharge of prior obligations, and that the right of the Irish Authority to the money shall begin at the point where the prior obligations end. For that purpose, except under the limited arrangement as to the Customs and certain Excise duties, we are not going to take the levying of the rents and revenues out of Irish hands. That is the very last thing I should desire to do; that of all others is the thing which would be most opposed to the purpose and the policy of the whole Act. But we are going to require that the money which has been levied for the service of Ireland shall all converge and run into a certain channel. We shall have the money, as it is sometimes said, between the body and the head, the head being the Irish Government. The money must all pass through the channel of the neck, and the neck is the Receiver General.

The Receiver General will find it necessary to appoint two deputies; but he will have nothing to do with the taxpayer—nothing to do except with the tax receivers; they will receive and collect the revenue for him. He will be subject to audit. He will be liable to prosecution by the State Authorities, and he will have full authority over the sub-receivers. He will, however, never annoy the taxpayer, nor come near him, nor, I hope, ever be heard of by him. He will not be the appointer of the collectors of taxes—that is a function we do not wish to see in his hands. The power of bringing actions against the sub-receivers in the Court of Exchequer will rest with the Receiver General; and that explains the provision which I have already mentioned to the House on a former occasion as to the judgments of the Court being supported by the public forces. This security will extend to everything in Ireland for the central purposes of government to Customs and Excise, and all public revenues whatever. Perhaps I may be told the old story of calling into existence a new Irish Legislative Body, and, at the same time, showing a mistrust of it. With great respect, I show nothing of the kind. These provisions have nothing whatever to do with my notions; they are not intended to satisfy me, nor the British public; but these are large operations, and the provisions are intended to satisfy a somewhat peculiar and fastidious class, the class of public creditors.

I say boldly that the maintenance of public credit is a common interest; it is the interest of Gentlemen opposite; it is the interest of Gentlemen here; above all, it is the interest of the Irish Nationalists, because Ireland will undoubtedly want to organize a credit of her own for public purposes. She will require it—I hope not to excess. She will want to organize her own credit by degrees, and she cannot organize a credit to be worked economically and safely unless the ground is absolutely solid under her feet, and the ground cannot be solid under her feet unless the securities for the fulfilment of all her prior engagements are absolutely unimpeachable. I submit that the Exchequer will be as safe in respect to these advances, under the provisions which I propose, as it is in respect of the collection of the taxes in England for the ordinary purposes of government.

Now, I will endeavour to exhibit with some exactitude to the House the position of the four parties interested in a pecuniary sense in this plan—namely, the Irish landlord, the Irish tenant, the Irish State Authority, and the British Exchequer. The case which I take of the Irish landlord, for the sake of simplicity, is the case of the landlord who has no public burdens and no encumbrances. I should greatly confuse the House were I to take the contrary case, and therefore I take the case of an Irish landlord who is so happy that he has nothing but his rates to pay. I take as an instance a gross rental of £1,200 a-year, and ask—" What will be the deduction ? " I can only calculate from general information as to rents. The circumstances of particular estates vary so enormously with regard to outgoings other than encumbrances that while the figure I am going to name would be much too high in some cases, it would be much too low in others. I am obliged to strike an average, and the deduction I take as the average figure is 20 per cent. Therefore, my gross rental of £1,200 will be reduced by the deduction of £240 to £960, and the normal rate of compensation at 20 years — and here, again, I put aside exceptional cases—will be £19,200.

Now, what will be the condition of the tenant? The maximum that he will have to pay will be £960—that is to say, 4 per cent upon 20 years' purchase, not of the sum the landlord receives, but of the gross rental which he has hitherto paid. That is the maximum payment, because, as I shall show you presently, there is a fund out of which, if it should seem right to the State Authority, some further favourable arrangement may be made. On receiving that deduction he will become subject to half-rates, because he becomes an owner. The 4 per cent. charge will continue for 49 years, and the legal ownership will become, at the end of that time, perfectly free ownership, without any annual payment, unless taxes should be laid upon the land by the State Authority.

Now for the position of the State Authority. That Authority will receive £960 from the tenant. What will it have to pay to the Imperial Exchequer? It will have to pay 4 per cent also, not, however, upon the gross rental, but upon the net rental. That will be £768. The cost of the collection of the net rental, we can confidently state, will be very low. It will only be 2 per cent—that is £19 4*s*. The State Authority will therefore receive £960, and the total charge upon it will be £787 4*s*. That leaves the State Authority £172 16*s*., or nearly 18 per cent. Then, what is the State Authority to do with this £172 16*s*.? On the one hand, it may be enlarged, because it will be larger in those cases where the compensation will be below 20 years, and therefore it will be larger if the average is below 20 years. On the other hand, it may be subject to certain deductions on account of the cost of conveyance, because we have thought it fair not to leave the landlord liable to unrestricted charges in respect of proof of title; and we shall accordingly fix very low the maximum of the costs which can be charged upon the landlord with respect to conveyance. The State Authority may also be liable to a somewhat heavier charge in respect of the redemption of quit rents, head rents, tithe commutations, and jointures, which cannot always be kept within the limit of 20 years. Upon the whole, there is no reason to believe that those considerations will cause any great invasion of the balance which I have shown to be free for the State Authority —about 18 per cent upon the sum payable to the landlord.

We have proceeded upon the principle that the State Authority may, in certain cases, find it necessary or think it expedient to grant some further remission to the tenant. But we are not acting simply for the interests of the Irish tenant; we are acting also for the interests of the Irish labourer and the Irish community; and it is our duty, if Great Britain is to make an effort by the use of her credit to bring about an improved state of things—it is our duty to leave some fair portion of the resulting profit to be for the advantage of Ireland at large, subject to the distribution and according to the direction of the Irish Authority.

I may say, that in case the whole of these transactions should go forward the sum becoming subject to the discretion of the Irish State Authority would be not much less than £400,000 a-year. Now, a few words with respect to the position of the Imperial Exchequer. The Imperial Exchequer assumes a maximum expenditure of £50,000,000. It may, or may not, be that; but I take the maximum. The interest, at 4 per cent, including Sinking Fund, will be £2,000,000. That will be the cash which the Imperial Exchequer will receive every year from the Irish Authority through the Receiver General, that admirable personage to whom I have already referred. How will this £2,000,000 be secured? If these transactions take place, the land rents which the State Authority will levy will amount to a net rental of £2,500,000, and we have the highest possible security for its vigilance in levying those rents. First of all, in its sense of right; secondly, in its sense of prudence; and, thirdly, in its sense of necessity, inasmuch as until the prior charge is paid it can touch nothing. The sum will, in the first place, be secured upon this amount of £2,500,000; but it will be secured also upon the balance of all Irish Revenue; and, thirdly, it will be a first charge on the taxes levied under the Irish State Authority, which I have assumed will amount to £5,778,000. You may say there is also the Imperial contribution to be taken into view. Yes, there is; but there is also a large further fund which may be taken into account —namely, Customs and Excise. If I add to the Imperial contribution and to the charge for the Constabulary the £2,000,000 which I have now spoken of in respect to land, the sum comes out thus. We want to get £6,242,000, and that is secured upon £10,850,000, no portion of which can be applied for any other purpose until our claim in respect of the £6,242,000 is satisfied. That I conceive to be securing British credit, and that is the only possible foundation for Irish credit also.

There is one other matter to which I wish to refer—it is the last with which I shall trouble the House. Some people have an idea that, under the present arrangement, we receive from Ireland, if not all that we desire, yet enough to replenish very materially our Imperial resources. That is a woeful delusion. We do nothing of the kind, and I will prove it. I do not say that Ireland does not pay enough; but I do say that we receive very little; and I am bound to add that, with the views I hold with respect to the unwisdom of our policy, I do not think that we deserve to receive more. The present contribution of the Irish taxpayer to the Revenues of this country is £6,980,000, and out of that we pay back for Irish Civil Charges £4,840,000. The residue of £2,000,000, in round numbers, is apparently an Imperial contribution from Ireland for the Army, the Navy, the National Debt, and other Imperial Civil Service Charges. But having got that, what do we do with it? We send an army to Ireland of 26,000 men, whom we have not dared to release, and which costs us £3,000,000 a-year, nearly £1,000,000 more than the apparent surplus of £2,000,000 to which I have just referred without any provision whatever for debt, the Navy, or Imperial Civil Charges. That, Sir, is the economy of the system which we have to root up from out the land.

I have detained the House a long time; but this is a complex question. I will detain the House no longer. I commend this measure with the utmost earnestness as a compliment to our policy, adopted under serious convictions both of honour and of duty—I commend it to your strict, your jealous, your careful, and your unbiassed examination, convinced as I am that when that examination has been given to it, both in regard to policy and honour and duty, it will be recognized as a fitting part of our proceedings upon this certainly great and, as I believe, auspicious occasion; and as fitting to—I do not say adorn—but to accredit and sustain the plans of the British Legislature for the welfare of what is, and what has long been, and what I hope will ever be, under happier circumstances than heretofore, an integral portion of Her Majesty's Dominions.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make amended provision for the Sale and Purchase of Land in Ireland."—(*Mr. W. E. Gladstone.*)

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I do not, Sir, propose to enter upon any lengthened examination of the very powerful and lucid statement just made by my right hon. Friend; but it appears to me to be a duty which I owe to the House that I should take the first possible opportunity of completing the statement which I attempted to make the other night as to the reasons which led me to quit the Government of my right hon. Friend. I much regret the misapprehension which arose on that occasion as to the limits accorded to me by Her Majesty's permission; but my right hon. Friend, in subsequently referring to this matter, spoke with so much kindness and generosity, and gave to the House so unqualified an assurance of his confidence in my good faith with regard to this matter, that I do not think it necessary to make any further allusion to it. I recognize the necessity, even the physical necessity, which has led my right hon. Friend to divide the two branches of the vast subject which he has brought before the House. I recognize the necessity; but, at the same time, I cannot help saying that it involves many inconveniences — inconveniences to my right hon. Friend in the exposition of his plan, inconveniences also to those who have taken exception to some portion of that plan. One thing the House will clearly see, that the whole plan of my right hon. Friend must be dealt with together. You cannot break it up into fractions—you cannot take one part without taking the other. If there were any doubt as to the fact that the plan which has been proposed and elaborated before the House tonight is an essential complement of the plan laid before us the other night, I think that that doubt would disappear in the face of the statement that has been made by my right hon. Friend, who has told us again and again what he told us in introducing the Irish Local Government Bill, that the two questions of Irish land and Irish government are, in his view—

> "Closely and inseparably connected, for they are the two channels through which we hope to find access, and effectual access, to that question which is the most vital of all—namely, the question of social order in Ireland."

I might also refer to the rather remarkable statement made at an earlier period by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He was speaking at Chelmsford on the 7th of January, when, in reference to the same matter, he said—

> "The beginning, no doubt, of any approach to any satisfactory settlement of Ireland must be some dealing with the Land Question. The late Government, to their great honour, passed an Act to prevent landlords confiscating the property of their tenants. That was a noble exploit. I do not think we shall be able to deal satisfactorily with Ireland until we have passed some legislation to prevent tenants from confiscating the property of their landlords."

I only refer to this statement to show that it is essential that we should have the whole matter before us before we can deal with any part of it. And when I had to consider the question whether I should continue in the Government, I had to ask myself, not whether I liked the scheme of my right hon. Friend for the government of Ireland, but whether I liked it so much that I was prepared to risk the money of the British taxpayer to the extent of £120,000,000 to secure that plan being adopted.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I would remind my right hon. Friend that at the moment when he left the Cabinet there was no question about £120,000,000, in this sense—that I stated before him and before my Colleagues that, so far as the subject of land was concerned, I had in view modifications and alterations of the plan which would go far to bridge over the differences between us. Upon the details of those modifications we never entered.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I cannot carry back my memory to the exact words of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman to which he has now referred; but no doubt he is substantially accurate. But what I will say in my own justification is, that I had not the slightest conception at the time I left the Government that it was the intention of the Prime Minister to reduce the sum of £120,000,000, which he had first mentioned, in the proportion to which he now proposes to reduce it. I can, however, best put the view I took of the situation at the time by reading to the House the letter which I wrote to my right hon. Friend on the 15th of March, the Monday following the Cabinet meeting, and in which I tendered my resignation to him. This letter is as follows:—

"40, Prince's Gardens, S.W.,
"March 15, 1886.

"My dear Mr. Gladstone,—I have carefully considered the results of the discussion on Saturday, and I have come with the deepest reluctance to the conclusion that I shall not be justified in attending the meeting of the Cabinet on Tuesday, and that I must ask you to lay my resignation before Her Majesty. You will remember that in accepting Office I expressed grave doubts as to the probability of my being able to support your Irish policy. Up to that time, however, no definite proposals had been formulated by you, and it was only on Saturday last that you were in a position to make a communication to the Cabinet on the subject. Without entering on unnecessary details, I may say that you proposed a scheme of Irish land purchase which involved an enormous and unprecedented use of British credit in order, in your own words, 'to afford to the Irish landlord refuge and defence from a possible mode of government in Ireland which he regards as fatal to him.' This scheme, while contemplating only a trifling reduction of the judicial rents fixed before the recent fall in prices, would commit the British taxpayer to tremendous obligations, accompanied, in my opinion, with serious risk of ultimate loss. The greater part of the land of Ireland would be handed over to a new Irish elective authority, who would thus be at once the landlords and the delegates of the Irish tenants. I fear that these two capacities would be found inconsistent, and that the tenants, unable or unwilling to pay the rents demanded, would speedily elect an authority pledged to give them relief, and to seek to recoup itself by an early repudiation of what would be described as the English tribute. With these anticipations I was naturally anxious to know what was the object for which this risk was to be incurred, and for what form of Irish government it was intended to pave the way. I gathered from your statements that, although your plans are not finally matured, yet that you have come to the conclusion that any extension of local government on municipal lines, including even the creation of a National Council, or Councils, for purely Irish business, would now be entirely inadequate, and that you are convinced of the necessity for conceding a separate Legislative Assembly for Ireland, with full powers to deal with all Irish affairs. I understood that you would exclude from their competence the control of the Army and Navy, and the direction of foreign and Colonial policy; but that you would allow them to arrange their own Customs tariff, to have entire control of the civil forces of the country, and even, if they thought fit, to establish a Volunteer Army. It appears to me that a proposal of this kind must be regarded as tantamount to a proposal for separation. I think it is even worse, because it would set up an unstable and temporary form of government, which would be a source of perpetual irritation and agitation until the full demands of the Nationalist Party were conceded. The Irish Parliament would be called upon to pay £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 a-year as its contribution to the National Debt and the Army and Navy, and it would be required in addition to pay nearly £5,000,000 a-year for interest and Sinking Fund on the cost of Irish land. These charges would be felt to be so heavy a burden on a poor country, that persistent controversy would arise thereupon, and the due fulfilment of their obligations by the new Irish authority could only be enforced by a military intervention which would be undertaken with every disadvantage, and after all the resources of the country and the civil executive power had been surrendered to the Irish National Government. I conclude, therefore, that the policy which you propose to recommend to Parliament and the country practically amounts to a proposal that Great Britain should burden itself with an enormous addition to the National Debt, and probably also to an immediate increase of taxation, not in order to secure the closer and more effective union of the three Kingdoms, but, on the contrary, to purchase the repeal of the Union and the practical separation of Ireland from England and Scotland. My public utterances and my conscientious convictions are absolutely opposed to such a policy, and I feel that the differences which have now been disclosed are so vital that I can no longer entertain the hope of being of service in the Government. I must, therefore, respectfully request you to take the necessary steps for relieving me of the Office I have the honour to hold.

"I am, yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

Well, Sir, I can only say that in the correspondence which took place upon that letter, my right hon. Friend said, in effect, that although he thought that upon some details it might be possible to take exception to my statement, or to modify my objections, yet that he was not hopeful of being able to do so with regard to the main objections which I took. That was the state of things, and I hope that that may be considered as concluding my personal explanation. That was really the state of things at the time that I quitted the Government. Since that time I must admit that great developments — considerable modifications — have taken place.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Perhaps the House will allow me, in personal explanation, to say that I am totally at a loss to understand the foundation of the idea that the right hon. Gentleman entertains, that I ever contemplated the formation of a Volunteer Army in Ireland. There has been no change whatever from the first in anything that relates to the subject of the Army and defence. It stands exactly as it did. In the letter which my right hon. Friend has read, he has certainly paid me the greatest compliment that I ever knew to be paid to a Prime Minister; because my right hon. Friend did me the honour to resign, not upon anything done by the Cabinet, or anything proposed to the Cabinet for adoption, but upon the first signification in the Cabinet of what I may call an early edition of a plan which I had personally framed.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: With reference to what my right hon. Friend has now said about the Volunteer Army, all I have to say is that I gathered his intention from a conversation, that I put that intention in the letter which I wrote to him, and that he did not take exception to it in the correspondence which followed. I quite accept my right hon. Friend's statement that he never intended to put it in. I am only saying this in my own justification. I could not know that I had misunderstood him, because, probably, in the press of business, or for any other reason, he did not think it necessary, or worth his while, to correct my misapprehension.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I took exception to the entire letter.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Well, Sir, as regards what my right hon. Friend has just said, that I resigned at a time when the proposals of my right hon. Friend had not received their final shape, I will remind him of my own reasons for that resignation, which I think he will himself admit had considerable weight. I thought enough had been said to indicate a determination on the part of my right hon. Friend, and an intention on the part of a majority of my Colleagues in the Cabinet, to bring before the House proposals to which I was in grave and serious opposition. Well, Sir, then I thought it was not fair, either to my right hon. Friend or to the Government, that I should remain among them. I remember the expression I used at the time to be "a chiel amang you takin' notes;" that I should remain, as it were—I am using the words about myself, and therefore am not using it in an offensive sense—as a sort of spy; after it had already become apparent to my mind that we were not likely to be able to agree. Well, Sir, that was the reason why I thought it honourable, and even honest, to tender my resignation to my right hon. Friend at the moment that these differences first disclosed themselves. But when my right hon. Friend told me he thought my resignation was premature, and asked me to remain until his proposals had assumed a more definite shape, of course I acceded to his request, and accordingly, as the House is aware, my resignation was not really accepted till March 27. Well, Sir, I was proceeding to say that since the time to which I have referred some changes or developments have taken place in the proposals of my right hon. Friend. In the first place—and this is a matter of great importance—the control of the Customs and Excise has been retained by the Imperial Parliament, and has been taken from the control of the new Legislative Body to be established in Dublin—that is to say, three-quarters of the whole of the existing Imperial taxation of Ireland is to be retained by the Parliament at Westminster. But then my right hon. Friend stated in his concluding speech in the debate on Tuesday night—I am not certain whether I am quoting his exact words, but I will say what I understood—that he was inclined to reserve for further consideration the question of the retention of the Irish Members in the Parliament at Westminster. He referred to what he called the weighty speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) on this subject, and the strong opinion that had been expressed in many quarters in reference to it; and, as I understood, my right hon. Friend does not dismiss the possibility of that retention from his further consideration. But, Sir, that is a matter of first and cardinal importance. It is a matter to which I have always attached the greatest possible weight, because if the Irish Members are retained at Westminster the Imperial Parliament remains the Imperial Parliament, and its supremacy would then be an established fact. The legislative authority in Dublin—you may call it a Parliament—will be a subordinate and not a co-equal authority; and in that case, and if my right hon. Friend is willing, as I understood him to be willing, to leave also an open question the inclusion of Ulster in this scheme, so that there may be two legislative authorities in Ireland instead of one—— [*Laughter and cries of* "No!" *from the Home Rule Members.*] Hon. Members opposite may not like it, but that is distinctly what my right hon. Friend said in introducing this measure; and I say that if it should be the pleasure of the

House to retain the Irish Members at Westminster and to make two Assemblies in Ireland instead of one, then, except in the name, I think it would be very difficult to see very much difference between this proposal and the proposal of National Councils which was referred to by my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), or a single National Council which I myself supported in June last. Well, Sir, if these great changes are to be made, as I sincerely hope they will be made, then other changes not less important will follow. What has been the reason, what has been the necessity for the safeguards which my right hon. Friend has proposed in such numbers? He has not proposed them because he likes them himself. He has told you that, for his part, he has no apprehension. It is because of the apprehension which he knew would be created by an authority so important as the one which was proposed in the first scheme of this measure. But if the authorities created are to be the subordinate local Assemblies in Ireland, then I say there is no need whatever for all these precautions for the Life Peerages in the Legislative Assembly, for the *ex officio* Members, for the property qualifications, for the provision of minority representation, all of which I do not hesitate to say are hateful to every Radical, and certainly contrary to the practice of the Liberal Party. Well, Sir, I say that in these changes, and in the prospect of greater changes to come, I rejoice to see an approximation between the views of my right hon. Friend and my own, which I did not dare to hope for at the time I left the Cabinet. I confess that with regard to the Bill which my right hon. Friend now seeks leave to introduce I am afraid that very serious differences of opinion will still exist. I objected to the original proposal of my right hon. Friend because, in the first place, it involved such an enormous sum of money. I thought it might have been possible to deal, at all events, with the most urgent part of this question by employing to a very much less extent British credit. I objected, in the second place, because I thought that in the scheme as it originally stood there was not sufficient security for the repayment of the money, and that the British taxpayer would probably have to make it good; and I objected, in the third place, because I thought that the scheme as originally introduced did not provide sufficient advantage for the poor tenant, with whom I had the greatest sympathy, and that, in fact, its central idea was wrong, inasmuch as it was brought in less for the advantage of the tenant of Ireland than to modify the supposed hostility of the Irish landlord. Well, now, Sir, to some extent these objections have been met. For instance, my right hon. Friend, as I understand his plan, now proposes that the Irish tenant should have an immediate advantage to the extent of 20 per cent on his present rent. That is a good deal more than my right hon. Friend was able to anticipate at the time when I was in the Government. That is a very important question, because the way in which his scheme will be received in Ireland must depend to a very large extent indeed upon the immediate boon it affords to the Irish tenant. Then, in the second place, my right hon. Friend, in a way which I confess I was not clever enough to follow very clearly during his speech, proposes to limit the issue of Consols, that was to have been limited to £120,000,000, as I understand, to £50,000,000. Well, Sir, my difficulty is this.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: £113,000,000.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Both figures were mentioned by my right hon. Friend. In the Paper he presented to the Cabinet £113,000,000 was, I think, my right hon. Friend's estimation of the extent to which his option would be taken advantage of by the Irish landlords—he will correct me if I am wrong—and £120,000,000 was to be the sum to which any issue of Consols was to be limited, and the issue was to extend over a considerable term of years. Well, at the present moment my right hon. Friend proposes to reduce, as I understand, the liability on the issue of Consols to £50,000,000. But, then, this is my difficulty. As I understand, option is to be given, in the words of my right hon. Friend, to every landowner with regard to all his rented agricultural land. Well, but I suppose the rented agricultural land of Ireland at 20 years' purchase is worth at least £150,000,000 sterling. I suppose that is the least sum— [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, then, let anyone who differs from me put his own estimate on it. This option is to be offered to every landowner to the extent of £150,000,000, and my right hon. Friend puts it forward as a very tempting one to the Irish landlords. If that be so, why should not all avail themselves of it? In that case you may, in the first year, have a demand for £150,000,000; and if that is accepted, how are you to limit the issue of Consols? My right hon. Friend proposes to issue scrip; but that is only the difference between the ordinary and the Floating Debt. So far as the liability of the British taxpayer is concerned, it is precisely the same. There is another point in which the changes made by my right hon. Friend are much more satisfactory. My right hon. Friend now proposes to retain the Customs and Excise with the Imperial Parliament. That makes a great difference in the security. The operation proposed by my right hon. Friend in the original Bill will now be reversed; and instead of Ireland having to pay a large sum in the shape of tribute to England, it will be England who will have to pay back to Ireland the balance of the Revenue of Ireland, after having recouped herself for interest and Sinking Fund. I do not mean to say that that means absolute security, but it certainly makes a great change, and one which will commend itself to the House when it comes to consider this proposal. Now, Sir, these alterations have lessened to some extent, though I cannot say they have removed, my objections to this measure. I want to make an appeal to some of my hon. Friends around me, especially in this quarter of the House, who have been very lavish of their criticisms upon the action which I thought it my duty, with great reluctance, to take in resigning my Office. Do they think that these changes are improvements, and are they going to accept them? If they are not, then, Sir, they lay themselves open to that charge of treachery and desertion which they have so freely brought against me in the last few days. But if they are going to accept them, they decidedly, though indirectly, justify the action taken by myself and my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs in resigning our Offices, because at that time, at any rate, we had no idea that these modifications could be or would be introduced. Well, Sir, I have said that, even in its present form, this measure is open to very serious objection. In the first place, I cannot help asking this question — If Ireland is going to be trusted with a practically independent Parliament, with the interests of the commercial classes, with the maintenance of civil and religious liberty, and the protection of social order, why, then, is it not to be trusted with the protection of the minority which is formed by one particular class of the community? If the commercial classes and Protestants of Ireland, and any other minority, are safe in the hands of the new authority, why are not the landlords also, and why cannot you leave their interests to the new authority? What we are doing is, to my mind, a matter of doubtful expediency. We are imposing a bargain on the Irish people which they do not like, as was clearly shown by the silence of hon. Members opposite during the speech of my right hon. Friend. Is there a single man upon those Benches who will dare to get up and say that he is of opinion that the price to be paid for the rights of Irish landlords is fair and one which he can approve? No, Sir. What is the price to be paid? My right hon. Friend assumed that four-fifths of the landlords would come under his option, and he assumed that the value of their property would be £113,000,000—that is, at the rate for the whole of the tenantable land of Ireland, of nearly £150,000,000, and it was upon this estimate that this scheme is based. It is upon that estimate that you, representing Ireland, will have to give your consent to a permanent payment, to be extorted from the people of Ireland for the interest on the Sinking Fund. Are Irishmen willing to reckon £150,000,000 as a fair price for the Irish land? I was very much struck the other day with an observation of Mr. Davitt, for whom, though I have never known him, I have conceived a great respect from his speeches, and who, perhaps, more than any other Irishman on the Nationalist side, has distinguished himself by his denunciation, both in America and in Ireland, of the outrages and the policy of crime by which the National movement has been disfigured. I believe him to be an honourable and an honest man, and not the least able in the long roll of Irish political agitators. The other day he said that, while he approved of the general character of the scheme which he assumed the Government were going to propose, he thought that if £150,000,000, or anything like it, were talked of, it would be an absurd valuation; for his own part, he would put it at nearer £50,000,000 or £60,000,000. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has again and again referred to the prairie value of the land as the proper standard; other Members of the Nationalist Party have given five years' purchase, and in one case, I believe, three years has been given as the fair price to be paid for buying out the Irish landlords. I am not stopping to inquire whether these prices are fair; but the question is whether the Irish tenants will think them fair. I look forward with some fear to the possibility of repayment of the money based upon rent fixed on a valuation which is twice, four, or even six times as much as has been fixed by the leaders of Irish opinion. Again, the prices are to be fixed at 20 years' purchase on the net rents payable in 1885. But we are in the midst of a great and remarkable change in the value of agricultural produce. I am told that this value has fallen in Ireland since the Land Act from 20 to 40 per cent. Are you sure it will stop there? Are you sure that the resources of South America to send dead meat to this country or of India to send corn have been exhausted? I confess that I am not, and that I should be sorry to base any great financial undertaking upon the certainty that there will be no further fall in the prices of agricultural produce. Sir James Caird has told us that with regard to one-half of the agricultural holdings in Ireland the "economic rent" has ceased to exist. I think he is wrong, and he does not sufficiently take into account the sums which are paid for the tenant right of some of these miserable holdings. But I shall not stop now to inquire. The point is—Do you think it likely that the Irish tenants will forget a statement made by so great an authority, or that they will be satisfied to pay a price based upon an estimate which they are told on the authority of those whom they have themselves elected is an extravagant one? There is another point. My right hon. Friend has made what he calls a tempting offer to the landlords of Ireland. I do not think that they will have very much temptation to remain there. They will obtain their rents in the form of claims on the British Treasury of Three per Cent Consols or New Three per Cents. Where will they spend their incomes? Why, Sir, in one of the finest passages in the speech of my right hon. Friend to which we have just listened, he spoke of the curse that absenteeism had been to Ireland and which it is now. Are you prepared to make absenteeism univeral? The general result of this will be that every landlord who took his money in the shape of this option would have no longer any reason to remain in the country, and it stands to reason that in the vast majority of cases the money would be spent out of Ireland and not at home. Well, Sir, my right hon. Friend has said that he considers that there is an absolute certainty for the payment of this loan which is proposed. I confess that I am afraid that the tenants may hesitate in the future, even when the loan is reduced, as in this scheme, to pay the interest to a State Authority, whether under the name of a Receiver General or any other name. But in that case my right hon. Friend thinks that this loss will fall upon the Irish Authority. Is that so certain? When you have a poor country, unable to pay its way, forced to contribute to England something like £4,000,000 a-year for the Army and Navy and the National Debt, although, as my right hon. Friend says, the receipts of England from Ireland are, at the present time, practically insignificant, and when you find that poor country forced also to pay rents calculated upon an English and not an Irish valuation, I think that the bargain will appear to the Irish people as a foreign bargain, that it will come to them in a foreign garb and dress, and hereafter they will think that they have an equitable right to repudiate it. If they repudiate it, I want to know what force there is in this House, what force there is in this country, to insure the fulfilment of conditions which can only be fulfilled by the goodwill of the Irish people. It is all very well to appeal to the honour of the Irish people, and to ask us to trust their honour. That would be all very well, if it were not that in its inception this scheme is repudiated by the Irish people in two of its most important particulars—namely, the amount of the contribution to be paid to the Imperial Exchequer, and the rate of purchase to be given to the holders of property. I confess I cannot disregard the idea of risk to the British taxpayer. I believe there is a great risk of failing to recover the sums lent if this scheme is carried out as proposed; and a step of this kind cannot be considered alone. Remember what a precedent you are making. I was not very long at the Local Government Board, but I was there long enough to feel great alarm at the prospect of the future. If the depression of trade continues—and, for my own part, I am unable to see any favourable prospect of improvement—you will have hundreds of thousands of respectable and honest and hard-working artizans falling out of the employment they have hitherto held, and subjected to great privation, and you will have demands from these people for State assistance growing in force every day, which, if a precedent of this kind be created, will become absolutely irresistible. If I had no other reason for objecting to this scheme, one—and I think a sufficient one—is that before long we may want this money for ourselves. We are refusing to the people of Scotland what I believe the majority of them want—that State aid should be given to assist the crofters, one of the most deserving of classes of the population, and who have been reduced to misery by bad laws which throw upon us just as great a responsibility as any laws in Ireland. We are refusing State aid to the crofters of Scotland; we are also refusing it, or at least postponing it, to the agricultural labourers of England, who ask you to give them opportunities to improve their position by securing for them some direct interest in the soil which they cultivate. You cannot refuse it to the crofters in Scotland and to the labourers of England, and, at the same time, grant it to the peasantry of Ireland. These are difficulties which I doubt not the House of Commons will weigh well before the second reading of this Bill. For my own part, I recognize the spirit of conciliation in which the Government have tried to meet some of the objections which have already been taken to their scheme. I know I need not assure my right hon. Friend or my Friends around around me that the differences which unfortunately for a time—I hope it may be only a short time—have separated me from my right hon. Friend, have left unimpaired my respect and regard for his character and talents. I am not an irreconcilable opponent. My right hon. Friend has made very considerable modifications in his Bill. All I can say is if that movement continues, as I hope it will, I shall be delighted to be relieved from an attitude which I only assumed with the greatest reluctance, and which I can only maintain with the deepest pain and regret.

MR. W. H. SMITH (Strand, Westminster): I must, I confess, take exception to the spirit of the speech in which the right hon. Gentleman introduced his measure. If one thing is to be deprecated more than another, it is the introduction into this discussion of anything approaching to passion, or the reviving of the memory of past wrongs and past errors. It does appear to me a very great misfortune that the right hon. Gentleman should have imported into this discussion allusions to the misfortunes of Ireland—allusions to her past history which were most painful and most deplorable. I cannot help reminding the right hon. Gentleman that he rose to the consideration of the question in 1881 in a very different frame of mind. Instead of reproaching the landlord class then in the language which was used on the present occasion, he stated to the House that the landlords of Ireland had been tried and acquitted. These were his words on April 7, 1881—

> "Well, Sir, neither, I am bound to say, should we think it just to propose legislation on this great matter on the ground, whether expressed or implied, of general misconduct on the part of the landlords of Ireland. On the contrary, as a rule they have stood their trial, and they have, as a rule, been acquitted."—(3 *Hansard*, [260] 892.)

That is the spirit in which it is possible to approach the consideration of the question with justice to all the interests involved. Now, with regard to the cardinal principle of the Bill, we are told that this is not a partial, tentative, or timid attempt, but a serious attempt to settle the question. The right hon. Gentleman has proposed to limit his advances for the settlement of this great question to the amount of £50,000,000. Now, my noble Friend on my right (Lord George Hamilton) made a Motion on the 12th of June, 1883, on this question. He proposed a scheme for carrying out a very extensive system of land purchase by which to preserve the tenant in his holding. That proposal was met by the Prime Minister with a negative, and he entered into a very able and long argument showing the impossibility of entertaining the proposal of my noble Friend. These were the words of the right hon. Gentleman—

> "I may state, moreover, that the proposal would involve the question of a State guarantee to the extent of several hundreds of millions—£300,000,000 or £400,000,000."

The right hon. Gentleman was interrupted by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), who said about £100,000,000. The right hon. Gentleman then replied—

> "I cannot give the absolute figures; but I venture to say it would not be far short of £300,000,000 of money that would require to be involved in the guarantee I am now speaking of."—(3 *Hansard*, [280] 451-2.)

It now appears that since 1883 the estimates of the Prime Minister have fallen from a sum of £300,000,000 or £400,000,000 to a sum about two months ago of £113,000,000, and under this Bill to a sum of £50,000,000. Now I wish to ask the House, first of all, whether this scheme is really an attempt, not partial or tentative or timid, but a serious attempt to settle the question? If an invitation is addressed to the landlords of Ireland, if they are induced to avail themselves of the Bill, I maintain that it will be quite impossible to limit the issue of Consols or promises of payment to £50,000,000. An engagement of this kind cannot be limited to such a sum. By what means is the Chancellor of the Exchequer to distinguish one applicant from another? The purchase must be complete or it cannot be carried out at all. There is another consideration which should be brought before the House and the country, and that is that the offer is to the landlord. It is an offer to any landlord of any agricultural lands in Ireland, and it puts him under the pressure that his tenant will at once be placed in a position of becoming an occupier of the land at an annual payment 20 per cent less than the rent which he now pays. The offer is made by the Imperial Parliament, and if he fails to avail himself of it he is handed over to the tender mercies—I do not say it in an offensive sense—of the Parliament of Ireland, which is not to be restricted in its legislation in regard to land, which can impose taxation on land, which can modify the relation between landlord and tenant, and may fail to put in force the ordinary law for the recovery of rent. If I were an Irish landlord I should say frankly that, considering all the circumstances of the case, I should think it wise to avail myself of the privileges of the Bill, rather than expose myself to the risks which might follow upon my failing to do so. I am afraid that the influence which popular opinion would have upon the Representatives in the new Parliament of Ireland would be such that it would be well nigh hopeless that the Government of Ireland would in any way assist the landlords. Under these circumstances, it appears to me that there is scarcely a landlord in Ireland who will fail to avail himself of the provisions of this Bill. Therefore, either the estimate made by the Prime Minister three years ago was grossly inaccurate, or the estimate now formed by the right hon. Gentleman must be very seriously and alarmingly inaccurate. It is said that it was an obligation of honour and policy on the part of Great Britain to carry out this scheme and relieve the Irish landlords. It has also been said that the landlord himself is a person who deserves very little consideration. But in some way or other the property that exists in land must be represented; and if you give a tenant the proprietorship of the land there is great probability, as experience has shown, that the occupying proprietor would be a man who would rapidly mortgage his land and get into debt. There would then be substituted for the landlord the mortgagee or the banker to whom the occupying proprietor paid interest. That may be a view which is not generally regarded, but it is one that ought to be borne in mind in dealing with this matter. The right hon. Gentleman has proposed that in the congested districts of Ireland the State itself should become the proprietor. I ask the House to consider what that proposal means. It should be borne in mind that great difficulty has been experienced in dealing with those districts. There have been many persons who have endeavoured, by all means in their power, to relieve the distress which prevails there, and who have, time after time, fed and clothed the people and found them seed. Such operations are going on now. Seed is being found for persons in the congested districts who are in arrears with their rents, and who, notwithstanding all that has been done in the shape of legislation, are still in a perfectly hopeless and helpless condition. There will be no State authority in Ireland strong enough to lift these unfortunate people out of their misery. The Prime Minister proposes to deal with these districts. For the purpose of improving these people you may remove them and find them some employment under other circumstances, or you may introduce new industries among them. I doubt whether it would be possible to introduce new industries which would afford means of livelihood to the hundreds and thousands who are now reduced to a state of starvation. And yet it is proposed to impose upon the new Parliament of Ireland a task which has baffled the skill of the English Parliament—the task of undertaking all the responsibility of the landlord and all the interests and obligations of a landlord. There will in the future be a recurrence of periodical famines and bad times, and then the landlords will be appealed to, and then, instead of receiving rent, the duty of the State will be actually to feed the people. What is the meaning of the exceptions from the scheme which the Prime Minister makes? If you leave portions of Ireland undealt with by the Bill, you leave an interest which will be an object of attack, for everyone knows that if there is anything unpopular in Ireland with the distressed classes it is that which is prosperous and successful. The landlord may wish to leave the country; yet the circumstances and conditions of his farm, his means of livelihood, are to be made the subject of attack by all who would like to cut up a grazing farm and turn it into an agricultural holding. I doubt very much the wisdom of introducing this apple of discord into a condition of things which the Prime Minister hopes will be a peaceful condition. Now, I feel some difficulty in realizing what are the authorities who are to deal with this matter. The Prime Minister says it must be an Irish State authority, and that this authority will greatly diminish the risk to the English taxpayer. Then the right hon. Gentleman spoke of a Land Commission with power to deal with the land. The Land Commission is to be more or less under the influence of the new Irish Parliament, and is to determine, under the Bill, what rate of purchase is to be given to the landlords, what deductions are to be made from the rental, and what rent the tenant is to pay for his holding. Then comes another person into the field, and that is the Receiver General—an English official—who is to get the rent by some means or other. And then, again, you have an army of sub-officials who are not to be English as the Receiver General is to be. The sub-officials are to act under the orders of the Receiver General, and they are to be subject to dismissal by the Irish Parliament. The Receiver General is to be at liberty to prosecute criminally before the English Division of the Irish High Court of Exchequer; and this English Division is to be supported by the power and authority of the representatives of Imperial power—the soldiers and the police. This arrangement must produce the greatest possible friction. The Receiver General is to be the neck through which every single farthing of the Revenue is to go, and he will not give a single sixpence for Irish purposes until the demands of the English Chancellor of the Exchequer are satisfied. If it be necessary to give Ireland a Parliament, I, for one, will be no party to the introduction of checks to control the exercise of its authority, which will be irritating in the last degree, and which will certainly bring about the exercise of that power the Prime Minister referred to—the power of the police and of the soldier—and will leave the last state of Ireland worse than the first. No doubt there are 25,000 soldiers in Ireland; but the Prime Minister omitted to state that the number had been materially reduced in times of war, and it is legitimate to ask how many men will have to be kept in Ireland under the proposed new arrangement? How many must we maintain there in order to protect the Receiver General from violence or indignity, and to make it quite certain that the Receiver General's debt will be collected, and that the £6,600,000 may be extracted from the Revenues of Ireland? I venture to think that the arrangement proposed is one that will bear little examination.

No one desires more than I do to give peace and prosperity to Ireland. The Land Question certainly requires to be dealt with. We have now a dual interest. Two persons claim property in the same piece of land; and there is a state of war between them. The tenant thinks that by the pressure of public meetings, intimidation, association, and combination he can extort the property of the landlord from him. This state of war has been brought about by the Land Act of 1881. Therefore, I fully admit the necessity for a settlement of the Land Question. It cannot be settled upon the lines proposed. The scheme makes a totally inadequate and illusory provision for that settlement; it involves unsettlement without settling or deciding anything. We have great responsibility resting upon us. What has happened in the last few years has increased and intensified that responsibility; but if we endeavour to look at the problem in a manner befitting the Parliament of a great country, to lay aside Party considerations, and to look the matter in the face soberly, courageously, and with a sense of responsibility, I do not despair of our finding a solution which shall at last dispose of this urgent question.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, that, as one of the rank and file of the Liberal Party, he could not pretend that he approached the settlement of the Irish Question in a sanguine spirit. In spite of all the eloquence of the Prime Minister, it seemed to him that they had but a choice of dangers and difficulties, and that whatever way they looked at it the danger and difficulty of solving that question were great and grave indeed. In these circumstances, he confessed that he had been inclined to think that the safest course, the least dangerous course, would be to follow the Prime Minister, especially in regard to his first Bill, provided he found that the cost of passing it would not be too great for the taxpayers of this country. He held that it would be a great advantage to get rid of the incubus caused by the entanglement of Irish affairs with the affairs of the rest of the Kingdom; but he wished first to know how much the taxpayers of this country were really to pay for the privilege and luxury of managing their English and Scotch affairs. Before accepting that great proposal and revolution in the relations of the United Kingdom, he thought they might reasonably have expected that the right hon. Gentleman would tell them what the cost would be, and that the Government would pledge themselves that they were showing their whole hand and not keeping back anything when they asked them to support these great proposals; but, having listened very attentively to the speech of the Prime Minister, he thought the right hon. Gentleman had not fulfilled that reasonable expectation, and had not told them what his plans would cost them finally and as a whole. It appeared that the £50,000,000 which had been mentioned would not be the final sum, but only an instalment of a much larger demand. Let them once embark on that principle of compensation, and it would be very difficult to stop. He did not well see how it was possible to offer compensation to one-third of the Irish landlords, and refuse it to the other two-thirds; and he further doubted whether they would be able to resist the claims of other classes in Ireland who called themselves Loyalists, and who might also find that they could not or did not like to live in Ireland under the new *régime.* The shareholders in Irish banks and railways, and other classes, who were poorer and more deserving than the landlords, might likewise demand compensation, and thus, unless they were very careful, the country might be involved in vast and indefinite liabilities. He was therefore placed in this dilemma, that he was disposed to vote for the first Bill of the Government, but he was afraid that the second would prove too expensive to the English and Scotch taxpayers. As regarded the right hon. Gentleman's calculations, what made him somewhat apprehensive was that a very large discretion was to be given in the valuation of that Irish property to the Land Commission, no doubt a highly respectable body, who felt the weight of their somewhat judicial responsibilities; but it should be remembered that they were Irishmen, dealing with British funds, and even the most high-minded Irishmen were always apt to be a little liberal with British money. Then the right hon. Gentleman only allowed 2 per cent for the cost of collection; but, speaking in the character of an old

Indian collector—and the result of that Bill would be to place Ireland in something like the position of an Indian district, where the Government was the superior landlord—he had no doubt that 2 per cent for the cost of collection, bad seasons, bad debts, remissions, and the like, was more likely to be 10 or even 20 per cent, even putting aside all political difficulties. He had, moreover, very much doubt about their ever getting back their money under that scheme. The Government had now an undoubted legal claim against the town of Limerick, which did not like to pay, and although successive Governments had come and gone, they had not yet managed to collect the sum due from Limerick. Again, the security which they were to have for their advances was the surplus of the Customs and Excise revenue; but that could not be safely relied upon. If there was any change in the mercantile condition of Ireland, or if the country became too hot for them, the great distillers would go to Scotland and England, and the Excise revenue from Ireland would become very insecure. It might also be endanged by temperance; or, again, by a whisky war. It should be borne in mind that not very long after the Union of England and Scotland a whisky war was waged by the Scotch, owing to their having their whisky subjected to the English spirit laws. It was doubtful whether we knew the worst that would come out of the working of the scheme. He had great difficulty in making up his mind as to whether we could bear the cost of it. Most of those who had spoken on the Ministerial side of the House had been more happy in their criticisms than they had been in the alternatives they had suggestsd. It seemed to him that we could not afford to set ourselves free from Ireland at the cost of the enormous compensation we were accustomed to give when we interfered with persons in the making of reforms and improvements. We could not afford to give the Irish landlords full security for the assumed value of their property at the present time. If we believed that Home Rule would be a success, we ought to say to the landlords—"You have had the smooth in the past; you must now, to a certain extent, take the rough. We cannot afford to remove you; and we rather expect you to stay and to do the best you can." Of course, there might be a doubt as to whether Ireland would be a particularly agreeable place for them to live in under a Home Rule Government. He hoped it would be; he thought it would be after listening to the Prime Minister; but, when he had slept over it, he had some doubts. But we ought to say to the landlords—"You are bound to make an effort to stay; and if you find it too hot to do so we must give you something in the way of eleemosynary aid, but we cannot give full you compensation. We want you to try to live in Ireland; but if you find that to be impossible then we will relieve you of your property at half-price." He hoped that on terms of this kind a large proportion of landlords would stay; but no landlord not absolutely insane would refuse the offer of 20 years' purchase. On the terms he suggested many would make an effort to stay. Whatever way they looked the difficulty was formidable. He was willing to support the Prime Minister in his first proposal; but he must reserve to himself his freedom of action as to the financial scheme of which he did not approve.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, that so colossal a scheme could only have proceeded from a gigantic intellect. It was so far-reaching that it could not be grasped in the few minutes they had had for consideration since they listened to the Prime Minister's eloquent speech. He would approach the matter from a prosaic point of view, dealing with the mercantile and financial aspects. He did so with deference, because he recognized in the Prime Minister a master of finance who had done much for our mercantile interests. He regretted that the scheme proposed would stereotype the poverty and the misery of the people of Ireland, and would render their position worse than it had been in the past few years, because it would tempt away the landlords who had paid the wages which had gone far to help the peasants to live. The Prime Minister had expressed in eloquent terms the hope that landlords would not avail themselves of the Act in any large numbers, but that there would be sufficient national feeling left in the breasts of many of them to induce them to reside there, and that others would see it to their interest to do so. To his mind, however, if it had been desired to frame a proposal to tempt the landlords to part with their property, it could not have been done more effectively than it was done by this plan. Every temptation was held out to them to go. He should not be surprised, if the Bill were unfortunately to become law, to find a great scramble amongst landlords to get hold of the first £50,000,000. In the first place, the terms were more liberal than he himself expected them to be; in the second place, the right hon. Gentleman said the £50,000,000 was not to be exceeded until three or four things were proved. Firstly, it was to be seen whether the market would absorb the £50,000,000 of stock; secondly, the time for making application was to be limited to 1889 or 1890; and, thirdly, before going beyond £50,000,000 he required to see how the repayments would be made. The landlords would thus see very considerable contingencies. Considerable doubts would be raised as to whether there would be any further issue beyond the first £50,000,000, and therefore it seemed to him that if it were distributed on the principle of the first come first served there would be a rush to get hold of the £50,000,000. Another point which would cause landlords to make this rush would be the fact that the new Home Rule Legislature would have the power to levy taxes on land. Knowing the sentiments of the hon. Members, who were to form the greater portion of the future Legislature, towards the landlords, and knowing that they were to have the power of taxing the land, the landlord, he thought, would be a man much wanting in commonsense if he gave them the opportunity of using that power of taxation on his property, when he had an early opportunity of obtaining Consols in exchange for the land. He ventured, therefore, to suggest that by the temptation offered to the landlord to quit the lands they would see Ireland divested of men of capital able to assist the tenants occupying small holdings. The tenants would be left to their own devices to eke out their livings in that hardest of all lots, the lot of the small farmer. The tenant would still have to pay that rent to the State which he had hitherto paid to the landlord, but there would be no consideration shown for arrears. The rent would have to be paid, because the State was the hardest of all taskmasters. But he asked the House now to look at it from the British taxpayers' point of view. He had shown that the disposition on the part of the landlords would be to send in applications for the State to buy the land, and that the first £50,000,000 would be quickly absorbed. It would, therefore, be absurd to say that having gone to the extent of £50,000,000 the nation could hark back, and refuse the remainder of the landlords the same terms and the offer they had given to the first applicants. They must not live in a fool's paradise. They must look on things as they were likely to be, and be prepared for the worst, not for the best. They must, therefore, consider what would probably be the ultimate responsibility of this country. A late Member of the Cabinet—a right hon. Gentleman who was not likely to exaggerate—intimated that it would take £150,000,000 to buy out the landlords of Ireland, and that might fairly be taken as the probable maximum responsibility which the British taxpayer would assume in the event of the Bill passing. That £150,000,000 would be issued at 3 per cent interest and 1 per cent Sinking Fund, or 4 per cent, because whether they received the money from Ireland or not they must keep up the Sinking Fund. The charge would therefore be 4 per cent on that £150,000,000, or £6,000,000 a-year. What was the security for that money? He agreed that the real and first security was the charge upon the duties which they were to collect through the Receiver General. These duties were estimated in round figures at £8,000,000 sterling, including no less a sum than £1,400,000, which was really paid by the British taxpayer, although the duties were paid in Ireland. He would not, however, deduct that amount. Of that £8,000,000 £3,600,000 was to be Ireland's contribution to Imperial Expenditure; and adding to that sum the interest of £150,000,000, amounting to £6,000,000 per annum, they had a first charge upon the duties to be collected in Ireland of no less a sum than £9,600,000. The duties, however, only amounted to £8,000,000, so that they had not sufficient security for the outlay which they must face. They were short by £1,600,000, and that must come from some source. But the sum of £8,000,000 was liable to be affected by very many and serious causes. We might have an alteration in the drinking habits of the people. We might want to make Commercial Treaties to increase our own trade and to reduce our duties. If we reduced the duties in England we reduced them in Ireland. And then there was another point to remember. The effect of this Bill would be to expropriate the great taxpayers of the country—the landlords. The duties now received in Ireland from the Income Tax amounted to £550,000, and the bulk of that was paid by the landlords and capitalists whom they must expect to leave the country. So that while they were throwing large burdens upon the country they would be reducing its taxpaying powers. Every pound of duty paid in Ireland over and above the tribute Ireland had to pay to England was to go to the benefit of the Irish Legislature, no matter whether the articles upon which the duty was paid were consumed in England or Ireland. The great duties in Ireland were tobacco and whisky. The value of tobacco varied from something like 3*d.* to 1*s.* per lb., whereas the duty varied from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* 4*d.* It would pay the new Irish Legislature to give to the tobacco manufacturers in Ireland tobacco free of cost, provided the duty were paid on it and the tobacco were exported to this country. It was the same with whisky. Whisky was worth something like 2*s.* per gallon, while the duty was 10*s.* 4*d.* per gallon. Look what an enormous temptation there would be to the new Irish Legislature to encourage the payment of the duty on whisky in Ireland which would be consumed in England. So that although they started with a common fiscal unity they would, as a matter of fact, have absolutely divergent interests in regard to the collection of the duties in Ireland and this country. The other security was the rent—the rent to be paid by hundreds of thousands of poor tenants—and he asked what would be the chance of the State collecting rents under the new Irish Legislature? These rents were dependent not only upon the state of men's minds, but upon the state of agriculture, and under the Bill they would be fixed for all time. Who knew what would be the state of agriculture, or that the prices of wheat and other products were going to remain even at the present low level? A day would probably come when our prices would be lower, and how was the poor tenant in Ireland to compete against such wheat-producing countries as India and America? The dead meat supply from abroad and from our far off Colonies was daily increasing, and everything was, in fact, competing with the small tenant farmer occupying a few acres of land in a climate so uncertain as that of Ireland. They knew that this competition had even reached the Black Sea. The Black Sea ports who used to export wheat to this country were being affected by the competition of our Indian Colonies, and he ventured to suggest that we could not possibly estimate what might be the rent-paying power of this class of people. To whom then were we to look to pay this £150,000,000? We came back to this, that the only security we should have would be the duties, and these duties were liable to all the consequences of the expropriation of those who paid so much of the taxation. The Prime Minister proposed, in the first instance, to issue £50,000,000 by instalments of £10,000,000, £20,000,000, and £20,000,000. But as it would be known that instalments of this large sum were to be given year after year, and that there was a contingent £100,000,000 in the back ground, we might as well issue the whole £150,000,000 at once as to have it hanging over the market. The effect would be the same upon trade and upon the money market. The Prime Minister, however, said that we need not go to the money market, but that we could raise the money and support the market with sums at the disposal of the Exchequer. To his (Mr. Forwood's) mind, that, he must say, looked very like "rigging" the market. It was a system of "bolstering" the market, and he should, for his own part, be sorry to see the national funds employed in a stock-jobbing operation. He thought it would be far better to raise the money in the market in one or other of the usual ways. But be that as it might, and in whatever way the operation was conducted, the effect on British industry would be that instead of £150,000,000 of capital being available for the general purposes of the country, that sum, and not merely the £50,000,000 contemplated in the first instance by the Prime Minister, would be absorbed in buying out the landlords of Ireland, and all for what? In order that we might maintain what would simply be a sham Union. His own feeling was that we ought to have a real Legislative Union as we had at present, or else a fair, clear, dividing line of separation. By taking the present step in the direction of separation we should make a great mistake, and take an amount of responsibility which would in the end lead to misfortunes and heartburnings, and eventually to separation. He was very glad to have heard the high sentiment from the other side of the House that it was not a Party question. He felt strongly that that was so. Party feeling should be set aside, for it was a question of Union *versus* Separation. He was speaking for himself, but he believed he quoted the sentiments of many other hon. Members on his own side of the House, when he said he did not mind who led the Government in that House, provided the Leader of the Government would maintain the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland.

Mr. HALDANE (Haddington) said, he would not follow the hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs (Sir George Campbell) and other hon. Members into criticism of details which seemed to him more suitable for the second reading or Committee stage. It might be said—and he thought it could have been said a few days ago with more truth than it could be now—that those Members of the House who, like himself, for the first time had taken their seats during the present Session, had not spoken out in any decided fashion on this great question. Doubtless a great responsibility, not only to their constituents but to themselves, rested on them. It was their bounden duty to come to a decision, and he, for one, did not find any difficulty in deciding what his judgment on the general question before them should be. Upon the details of a Bill which was not now before the House it was his duty to reserve his judgment in the fullest manner. It might be that when he came to read the Bill there would be things in it to which he could not agree; but it was his duty not to form any judgment before he had seen the measure. He could not but feel with the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) that they had come to a parting of the ways; and he felt that every political instinct, every Liberal principle, impelled him to sympathy with both those Bills. It might be that they were taking a very grave step in the case of the proposals now before the House; but he could not help saying—and perhaps it was because it was his good fortune to sit below the Gangway—that he had a great deal of sympathy with the case of many unfortunate landlords. Bad as the landlords in Ireland had been in the past, those of to-day stood in a very different position. They were oppressed, they were even hunted down, they were made scapegoats for the sins, not of themselves, but of a Government which was alien to the sympathies of the people. It was not so much the landlords individually as the system of landlordism with its class interests and class privileges which was to blame for the present condition of Ireland. It was due to the landlords who were placed in that unhappy and anomalous position that they should receive every possible consideration. They had all known for the last three months that the Prime Minister would introduce Bills dealing with Home Rule and Land Purchase. The time had come for England to retrace the step taken by Mr. Pitt in 1800, a step which was possibly the greatest blunder ever made by a great statesman. Mr. Burke had stated about the year 1790 that in case of foreign war we could rely upon Ireland as our greatest source of strength. Unhappily, that could not be said now. We had crushed the spirit of nationality in a people who possessed it in a greater degree than any other peope of Europe, with the natural consequence of the degeneracy of that people. No place had been left for the exercise of the energies of their politicians; but he trusted that the two Bills of the Prime Minister would provide scope for them. It seemed to him that the considerations on which they had to approach both these Bill were very simple. The issue was very plain—could they or could they not trust the Irish people? He did not use the word "trust" in any special sense. He used it in the sense in which they were willing to trust the people when they extended the franchise. Would they trust them to govern themselves, believing that they would grow and improve under the system of self-government? He believed that underneath the agitated surface of Irish opinion there flowed steadily onwards a broad current of human interest which was everywhere present; and, holding that view as part of his Liberal principles, he approached the consideration of these two Bills with every desire and every wish to support the Prime Minister to the utmost of his strength.

Mr. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead) said, he admitted that there was a certain degree of inconvenience in discussing a Bill before it was in print; but, at the same time, there were one or two points which arose on the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman which were clearly before the House, and which he thought it would be well to consider even before this Bill was brought in. The Bill depended upon two propositions—firstly, the amount we were to advance for the purchase of the estates of the landlords of Ireland; and, secondly, the security we were to have for the recoupment of those advances to this country. He believed that every Member of that House was there in a fiduciary character, and that in voting a grant of public money he was bound to see, not only that it was devoted to proper purposes, but also that there was a sufficient security for repayment. They were asked to sanction the raising of some £50,000,000 by an addition to the National Debt; but he did not believe any man in that House thought the amount would really be limited to £50,000,000, or anything like it. To suppose that the Irish landlords could be bought out for £50,000,000 was a practical absurdity. We were putting ourselves in the position of one of those unfortunate individuals who went into so-called Limited Liability Companies, and, supposing that his liability was to be limited to the sum paid on allotment, was not prepared for the successive calls which were made upon him and the final payment on the winding up of the concern. Hon. Members knew that these advances did not cover the liability, and that they must really contemplate not another £50,000,000, but £50,000,000 beyond that. And what were we to expect in return for our advances? The question of the security had been dealt with by the hon. Member for Ormskirk (Mr. Forwood) who had shown how flimsy those securities were which depended upon the contributions of Ireland to the Consolidated Fund. Really and substantially the security was the rent which would have to be obtained from the Irish tenants. According to the Prime Minister, that sum would be sufficient, allowing 20 per cent off; but a good deal more than that would have to be deducted during bad times, and if the Receiver General enforced the original rents Parliament would never hear the end of it. But was the rent of Irish tenants a security which any sane man, any public company, or any body of individuals in this country would advance their money upon at the present time? The right hon. Gentleman would find he had made a miscalculation, inasmuch as he had not taken into account the fact that on nearly every estate in Ireland an abatement of 15 or 20 per cent of the judicial rent was claimed. Then the right hon. Gentleman assumed that the rent would be paid by the tenant to the day. His calculations were based upon that; but Irish rents were always paid with the greatest reluctance, as was proved by the numerous evictions which occurred. If they paid their rents reluctantly to the Irish landlords, was it likely that they would pay more willingly if the English Government were to receive the rents? The Prime Minister contemplated a Receiver, as he said, behind a curtain; but the Irish tenant was pretty shrewd, and would tear his curtain to tatters, exposing not only the Receiver, but the English Government behind him. The Budget that was presented to the House yesterday showed that the country could scarcely pay its way, and an Income Tax of 8*d.* had to be kept up a time when there was no extraordinary expenditure. In face of these facts, it was proposed to lay an additional burden of many millions on the people of Great Britain. He did not think that they would be discharging the duty they owed to their constituents if they did not strenuously resist such a proposal.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.) said, there had been a disposition to go into the *minutiæ* of the Government Bills a great deal more than was necessary at this stage. The question was, what was really the situation of Ireland, and the relation of this Parliament to that country? He believed nothing truer had been said in the course of these debates than that it was no longer possible for this House to rely on a system of repression in Ireland. Hitherto the Liberal Party had been able to rely on the Conservatives in applying a policy of repression to Ireland; but during the last few months a change in the tactics of that Party had been apparent. He favoured in the main the proposals of the Government, because he felt, as many hon. Members must feel, that it was an idle phrase to talk about the existence of the integrity and the unity of the Empire at that moment. That they had to keep an army and an armed police force in Ireland proved that there was no such thing as the integrity and unity of the Empire, and the attitude of the Party led by the hon. Member for Cork was conclusive evidence that they, at any rate, did not regard the unity of the Empire as a thing of any moment. We had reached the extremity of any temporizing policy, and he looked forward to the scheme of the Prime Minister producing increased good feeling between Great Britain and Ireland. It would be impossible for any Nobleman or Chief Secretary—if there was not some change in the situation—to go through the ordeal which Earl Spencer and Mr. Forster found so hard. He believed it would be infinitely better for both England and Ireland that this great experiment should be tried. Objection was raised that the supremacy of Parliament would suffer if 100 Irish Members left the House, and he admitted there would be a difficulty if it were coercive; but supposing it were left open to the Irish Members, he believed they would almost to a man prefer to absent themselves, and for a generation at least give themselves up entirely to the great task of regenerating their country that was now before them, and which would tax their energies to the utmost. When they should have successfully coped with the difficulties which at present impeded the advancement of their nation, they might return to the Imperial Parliament if they should so desire. He looked forward to a great improvement in the material condition of Ireland as the result of the proposed new order of things, and to a large increase of commercial relations between that country and Great Britain. Had the Conservative Party ever complained of the burden that was at present thrown on Great Britain by Ireland? It seemed that if the money was spent in repression, it was an outlay which the Conservative Party contemplated with resignation, if not with pleasure. An outlay of this character was productive only of misery and bad feeling; but he anticipated that when the responsibility of governing Ireland was cast on her own gifted sons, there would be an improvement in the material condition of the country. It was easy to picture the Irish Leaders as being rebellious at heart. The Irish Representatives might not at times have pursued the wisest course; but there had been ample provocation for almost something of a rebellion in Ireland. Therefore, he was not disposed to think that there was any additional dose of original sin in the Irish character; and, on the other hand, he anticipated that if the opportunity was given to Ireland there would be an honest and brave effort to set about the work of regeneration. During the next few months all manner of evil prophecies would come from the Tory Party and from timid Liberals. The Conservatives had proved themselves very bad prophets in the past. Whenever any reforms were proposed they were always loud in their assertions as to the fearful results that would follow; but such prophecies were always belied by the future. Their present outcries were, therefore, not be taken very seriously. Like other Members of the Liberal Party, he had felt deep concern at the differences that had arisen between the Leaders of that Party; but from the tone of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham's speech that evening, he was glad to notice that the differences which separated that right hon. Gentleman from the Prime Minister were gradually disappearing. The modifications that had been made in the Ministerial plan were leading to a *rapprochement* between them. When the country understood the points of the two proposals now before the House the right hon. Member for West Birmingham would find that the Prime Minister would be supported by the great bulk of the Liberal Party. He trusted that his right hon. Friend (Mr. J. Chamberlain) and others who felt with him would feel it to be their duty not to insist upon their own views, in order that a settlement of this great question should be reached. We had a great problem to solve, and we had a great object to serve. The question might not be settled in this Session of Parliament; but they all felt that it must be settled on the side of the Government. There were 86 Home Rule Members from Ireland. He believed also that the great majority of the people of Great Britain, when they were fully informed as to the proposals of the Government, and of the Government intended for Ireland, the great majority of the country would rally to the support of the Prime Minister. He thought the Members who represented Lancashire and Yorkshire ought to proceed with as much caution in regard to all proposals for increasing the expenditure, or dealing with the obligations of the country, as any other Members of the community; and yet he did not hesitate to say that the great majority of the people in these two great counties would be prepared to endorse in the main the proposals of the Prime Minister even with regard to the scheme laid before the House to-night. If we entered upon this great experiment with faith and hope, we had reason to hope and expect and assume that we should have a regenerated Ireland. The unhappy relations which existed at this moment, and had prevailed throughout the history of Ireland since the Act of Union, would come to an end, and so far from there being any natural hostility between the British and the Irish people, there would be a real union between Great Britain and Ireland, as true and as genuine as that between England and Scotland. He expressed his satisfaction with the main outlines of the proposals now before the House, and he trusted that the Liberal Party, both in the House and out of it, would rally to the Prime Minister, who in this last hour of his life had shown a courage, and a patriotism, and a regard for the Sister Country which would make him venerated in Ireland.

Sir **ROBERT FOWLER** (London): The hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth) has repeated to-night the argument which has often been put forward—that the circumstances of the case are changed, because there are now 86 Home Rule Members in the House. But surely that was a matter which was thoroughly foreseen at the time of the General Election, and therefore no surprise need be felt at that, nor is it a reason why the Party opposite should deviate from the programme laid down for them at that time. I concurred with many hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House last summer; and much as they differed as to the constitution of Parties in the New Parliament, all agreed that the hon. Member for Cork would have 80—many said more than 90—followers. The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister has given a very eloquent account of the wrongs of Ireland. If Ireland has suffered wrongs, I would ask who is more responsible for them than the right hon. Gentleman himself? The right hon. Gentleman often tells us that he has been 50 years in this House, during the greater part of that time he has been in the Government, and for 11 or 12 years he has been Prime Minister of England. There was one measure the right hon. Gentleman referred to, which was brought in by Lord John Russell when he was Prime Minister, nearly 40 years ago—namely, the Encumbered Estates Bill. I believe that the right hon. Gentleman was, at that time, in a sort of neutral position, and was giving an independent support to the Government of Lord John Russell. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman must feel a certain amount of responsibility for that measure. There is one thing, however, in regard to which there can be no doubt of the right hon. Gentleman's responsibility. In 1868 the right hon. Gentleman came before the country, saying that he was going to cut down the Upas tree of Protestant ascendancy. At that time the right hon. Gentleman was contesting South-West Lancashire against my right hon. Friend, the late Home Secretary (Sir R. Assheton-Cross). His candidature was unsuccessful, and upon his defeat he was returned for the borough of Greenwich. Nevertheless, the Party led by the right hon. Gentleman were returned in a large majority, and the Upas tree was cut down. But I would ask any man whether Ireland is as peaceful at the present moment as it was when the Duke of Abercorn left it in 1868? From the time that the right hon. Gentleman took his seat on the Treasury Bench as Prime Minister, there has been a constant succession of troubles in Ireland; and I venture to think that so long as the right hon. Gentleman sits there, there will never be peace and order in Ireland. Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway know perfectly well that so long as they can frighten the right hon. Gentleman, there is nothing he will not concede to them, provided they agitate enough. Look at the number of illustrious men who have been Colleagues of the right hon. Gentleman, but who have left him on this very subject. There was the Duke of Argyll, and also my honoured and lamented Friend, the late Mr. W. E. Forster. Then, again, there is another distinguished man who, although he never obtained Cabinet rank, holds a position which, in my opinion, is quite equivalent to Cabinet rank—the present Governor General of Canada (the Marquess of Lansdowne). When the right hon. Gentleman attempted to form the present Government, his most distinguished Colleague, the noble Marquess the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington), refused to join him, and my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) made a sacrifice such as was never made before by any public man. My right hon. and learned Friend declined the highest honour of his Profession, because he could not concur in the Irish policy of the Prime Minister. Since the House met, other Colleagues have left the right hon. Gentleman—the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), and the right hon. Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage), not to speak of others who held minor appointments in the Government. Now, Sir, I think the question that we shall have to decide after Easter is—Whether, under the guidance of the right hon. Gentleman, the House is to break up the Empire? [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I repeat that the question we shall have to decide is the disruption of the Empire. The hon. Member for Bradford who has just sat down, says that the people of Lancashire and Yorkshire are prepared to support the right hon. Gentleman in that suicidal policy. The hon. Gentleman speaks for Yorkshire, and I should prefer that some other hon. Member who represents Lancashire should speak for that great county, which, I believe, sends a majority of its Members to this side of the House. Personally, I have not the honour to be able to speak either for Lancashire or Yorkshire; but, humble as I am, I speak for a great constituency, the greatest commercial constituency in the world, and I can only say that, at a meeting recently held, the most distinguished men in that constituency, many of them warm supporters during all their lives of the right hon. Gentleman, came together to protest against this scheme, and I have already had the honour of presenting the Petition which they drew up. I have to thank the House for having permitted me to make these observations, and I would earnestly appeal to every man who loves his country, and wishes it to remain what it has always been, to oppose this suicidal policy of the right hon. Gentleman.

Sir HENRY MEYSEY-THOMPSON (Lincolnshire, Brigg): Perhaps I may be allowed, as representing an agricultural constituency, to point out one thing in the Bill now before the House. Many hon. Gentlemen seem to think that the Irish landlords will receive 20 years' purchase upon the rent; but, having been a buyer as well as a seller of land, I know that in England, when we talk of a certain number of years' purchase, we mean that number of years' purchase of the gross rental, making no deduction for anything except fixed burdens; while in this case it is proposed to make, in addition to the fixed burdens, a further deduction of 20 per cent for rates and taxes, cost of collection, bad debts, and other matters. Therefore, if the rental of an estate amounts to £1,000, after deducting 20 per cent, in addition to the fixed burdens, the owner would receive not £20,000, but £16,000, which is only 16 years' purchase. Consequently, according to English calculation, the Irish landlords, under this Bill, will receive 16, and not 20, years' purchase upon the rent of the property.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): The hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth), told the House that Lancaster and Yorkshire are in favour of the Irish policy of the Prime Minister. As a Representative of a Lancashire constituency, I am prepared to say that if that county were polled upon this question, I, for one, should feel no doubt as to the answer it would give. We have been told that the elections in Lancashire were carried by the Irish vote, and that the Conservatives who were returned are bound, in gratitude to support so-called concessions to Ireland; but I challenge any hon. Member to find any Conservative Representative for a Lancashire constituency who will say that, at the last Election, there was any colour for the supposition that there was the slightest tendency displayed on either side in any Lancashire constituency towards any step calculated to impair the unity of the Empire. I can certainly speak with confidence on behalf of my own constituency. A Liberal candidate contested one of the seats; but he insisted earnestly upon the necessity of maintaining the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. I am quite sure that if any candidate had come forward with the opposite policy he would not have polled anything like the number of votes which the gentleman who opposed me on that occasion did. It is somewhat difficult to speak off-hand upon the measure which has been put before us by the Prime Minister to-night; but I think we must all feel that he has placed this intricate scheme before us in a very clear and distinct manner. Those questions which bear upon the details of the Bill as a scheme for expatriating the agricultural landlords of Ireland have already been dealt with by previous speakers. The point I wish to call attention to—and it is the only justification put forward for bringing in such a Bill—is that the Prime Minister and his Colleagues feel it quite impossible to trust the Irish Parliament to deal fairly with the owners of land in that country. I think it is to be regretted that the Prime Minister should have introduced his argument by the long retrospect into the past history of Ireland by which it was prefaced. We have heard a reference to ancient history deprecated, and I cannot help thinking that a reference to anything which is calculated to arouse passions which we all would wish to see buried, and feelings which we hope may subside in the course of time, is much to be deprecated. The reason I desire to call attention to this point is that I think such a course tends to make people lose sight of the real ground on which alone this Bill can be supported. It is not on account of the past history of the relations between the landlords and tenants that the right hon. Gentleman finds it difficult to trust the Parliament of Ireland in dealing with the question of land. There are many other differences in the relations between those who have property and those who pay rent which have a bearing upon the difficulty in Ireland. One point to which I wish to call attention is, that if we cannot trust an Irish Parliament to deal fairly between landlords and those who pay rent in respect of agricultural land, how are we going to trust them in reference to other property? A large part of the capital of Ireland has been spent in building houses, and those who have spent their capital in building houses expect to live on the proceeds of the rent of those houses. This is not an idle speculation; but I find that the same feeling has been excited in those who pay rent for houses as exists among those who pay rent for agricultural land. We already hear that in some of the towns of Ireland, in addition to the National Land League, House Leagues have been formed, and the question has become a subject of reference to a Committee of this House. Then I want to know whether this Parliament is entitled to consider, in dealing with the Irish Question, a scheme for advancing British money for the purpose of expatriating Irish landlords, which, nevertheless, leaves out of consideration this question affecting house property in Ireland? Then, again, this Bill leaves out of sight altogether the case of the manufacturers. I think it is hardly possible for anyone who has spent any time in Ireland to disguise from himself the fact that there is a tendency in many parts to depreciate machinery and those manufactures which are produced by machinery in comparison with what is produced by hand. I happened to be in the county of Donegal for a few days in the autumn of last year, and I found a general impression in the more distant parts of the county that something should be done to encourage the production of articles by hand in preference to those which are produced by machinery. Have the Government taken this matter into consideration? And I would ask, is it right or fair in the Bill now introduced to leave the manufacturers in Ireland wholly unprotected? I think these are very serious questions which we ought to consider, and to my mind they seem to show the utter hopelessness of the scheme which the Prime Minister has placed before the House. I certainly think that the prospect of carrying the Prime Minister's original scheme has not been increased by the introduction of this second Bill.

Mr. J. WILSON (Edinburgh, Central): I think it is only fair to say that the bulk of Scotch Members are, like myself, unpledged to the proposals of the Prime Minister. I myself, and I think most of my Colleagues, have held ourselves in reserve, as I think we were antitled to do, until we had the text of the Bill in our hands, and full time to consider the details of this great scheme with that minuteness, care, and caution to which the scheme itself is certainly entitled. I desire to speak frankly to the House; I believe that on this important question every Member should speak out from his heart what he believes—whether, on the one side, he disagrees with his Friends, or, on the other, pleases his supposed enemies. In the course of the debate we have been told that the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland was carried by bribery, corruption, and intimidation. I would remind the House that something very much of the same kind may be said with regard to the Act which united Scotland and England. Turning back to the history of that Union I find that it is scarcely possible to discover in the annals of history anything more disgraceful than the means which were employed to bring about that Union. Not only were bribery and corruption resorted to, but throughout Scotland the strongest feelings of anger were created. So much so was that the case, that there was almost a rebellion in consequence. But I am not disposed to go back and tear up the Act of Union simply because it was not carried in the honourable way in which it ought to have been carried. Again, it is stated that during the time of Grattan's Parliament—from 1782 to 1800—Ireland made great commercial progress, and enjoyed great social peace and happiness. Now, I am bound to say that that is entirely untrue. I admit that during the first five or six years of Grattan's Parliament there did appear to be a semblance of prosperity; but if you look into Irish history you will find that it was an artificial prosperity, caused by the gift of bounties to various classes connected with the commercial interests of the country, and that towards the close of that period there was anything but peace and prosperity in Ireland. If you go back to the date of the Union I maintain that since the Union Ireland has made great advances in material prosperity—much greater than at any period anterior to the Union. If we examine the amount of capital in the country, the savings in the banks, or anything else by which we can test the wealth of a nation, we shall find that Ireland has undoubtedly made great progress since the Union. There is still another unfair argument which almost vexes me more than anything else I have heard. We are constantly spoken to as if the wrongs inflicted upon Ireland in olden times are attributable to this generation. You must not forget that we are not responsible for what Henry II. did, or what Cromwell did; we are only responsible for what has been done in our own day under our own eyes and by ourselves. I appeal to this House whether the living generation of Englishmen or Scotchmen should be charged with unkind dealings towards Ireland? I would ask, is there any country in the world which has shown so much sympathy for Ireland as England and Scotland have done, especially in that period of distress which occurred in 1846, 1847, and 1848? I recollect with pride how British hearts bled for Ireland, and British hands were stretched out to succour her. I do not believe that that feeling towards Ireland has subsided; and, on the contrary, I am satisfied that the feeling of England and Scotland towards Ireland is genuinely kind. Under these circumstances, I am disposed to consider the Bills of the Prime Minister in the most favourable light. Whatever can remove discontent from Ireland, whatever can make her feel that we love her, we should be willing to do. It is not to the interest of Ireland to be disassociated from England. Who are Ireland's best customers now, and who have always been her best customers? Who buys all the Irish butter, bacon, pork, poultry, and eggs? England and Scotland. It is not America. America is supposed to be the bosom friend of Ireland. That is the greatest fallacy that was ever spoken, for America is Ireland's worst friend, commercially speaking, and if there has been any falling off whatever in Ireland's prosperity and in her agricultural produce, it is entirely owing to the competition of América with Ireland in the special departments of her industry. I therefore say that it is not to the interest of Ireland to associate herself with America as against Great Britain. She would be extremely foolish if she did so; but I am satisfied the Irish people know that—indeed, they cannot avoid knowing it. What would separation from Great Britain mean? At the present moment every Irishman has the run of our Colonies, and there are thousands of young Irishmen who, energetic as they are, go out to the Colonies and obtain important positions; indeed, at this moment, it is rather a complaint with us Scotchmen that young Irishmen get too many of the good appointments. I am sure, however, that we do not grudge them their success. We are glad to see young Irishmen making a career for themselves, because we know that they are well worthy of all the success which attends them. But, for these reasons, it is not to the interest of Ireland to be separated from Great Britain. Scotchmen are entirely unpledged with regard to this scheme; they are unpledged, because they desire to look at both measures in the most fair and candid way possible. I will not at present say a word about the principle of the two Bills; but as regards the land measure, I am inclined to say that it recommends itself to me more than the Government of Ireland Bill does. I think that the Land Bill, as explained, has many excellent features in it; but if both schemes are to go through, certainly there are some modifications which I should be glad to see introduced into them. I take it that by the time these schemes are toned down and finally settled, we may, without mutilation, endeavour to carry them through Parliament. I hope the Irish Members will try to meet the English and Scotch Members as much as the English and Scotch Members will try to meet them. I believe it is by mutual concession that we must endeavour to carry these schemes through, and I would rather see them carried by a large majority than in a grudging and grumbling spirit. They must be gone into in a kindly spirit and in good faith in order to insure good results; and I trust that when we come back to this House, after Easter, there will be a sincere effort made to carry both Bills through in a spirit of concilliation and kindness.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), I understand, in his speech this evening, challenged any Irish Member to express his approval of this Bill to-night. Now, of course, we Irish Members have not had the advantage which the right hon. Gentleman has had of a seat in the Cabinet—an advantage which gave him an opportunity of acquiring a more intimate knowledge of the measure we are now discussing than we can have even now, after we have heard it explained by the Prime Minister; and it would be both venturesome and imprudent for any hon. Member in this House, I think, whether Irish, English, Scotch, or Welsh, to express a too positive or too confident opinion with regard to the demerits or merits of this particular measure. In fact, the Prime Minister expressly warned us against forming any very confident judgment until we had seen the Bill; and I intend, with all due deference to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, to take the advice of the Prime Minister with regard to the matter, and to decline the challenge which he has so unnecessarily thrown upon the floor of the House. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of my friend Mr. Michael Davitt in very laudatory terms—terms which that gentleman very well deserves. The right hon. Gentleman also spoke of my friend as if he hoped that he himself might receive some assistance from him in his attitude of rebellion against his late Colleagues. Well, Sir, I venture to think Mr. Davitt will do nothing hastily with regard to this Land Question, or without full consideration, and that, when he does act, he will not act from motives of personal spite or personal jealousy, but that his actions will be dictated by a regard, and a sole regard, for the interests of his country. The right hon. Gentleman is very affectionate towards Mr. Davitt to-night; but he was a Member of the Cabinet which sent Mr. Davitt, a few years back, into all the horrors of penal servitude, and from that time to this the right hon. Gentleman has never raised his voice against that treatment of Mr. Davitt, either publicly or privately, so far as I know. Well, Sir, I will pass from the right hon. Gentleman by saying generally that, although I cannot be expected to go minutely into the question of the merits of the Bill, or to express any confident opinion with regard to a measure which I have not yet seen in print, and of the details of which I know very little, there are one or two points upon which I think I may speak more fully and more freely, as they appear to me to be pretty clear. I think I may speak generally on the subject of the purchase of land by the State, and more especially on the purchase of land by the State in Ireland. But, first with regard to the appointment of a Receiver General. That certainly seems to me to be a very unnecessary, strange, and absurd proposal. According to the statement which the Prime Minister made to us the other night, it would appear that the receipts from the Customs and Excise in Ireland are to amount annually to within £20,000 of the total sum which will be payable to the Imperial Authority in respect of the charges for the Constabulary and National Debt and other Imperial charges under the Government of Ireland Bill of the right hon. Gentleman, and also in respect of the advance of the £50,000,000 of money contemplated by the Bill. These Imperial charges will amount altogether to £6,200,000. That includes the interest on the Sinking Fund of the £50,000,000 as well as the charges payable to England under the Government of Ireland Bill of the Prime Minister. Well, Sir, the receipts in Ireland from the Customs and Excise amount annually to £6,180,000, or within £20,000 of the total Imperial charges which the Imperial Authority will itself collect, and thus the Imperial Authority will have these receipts entirely under their own charge. They will collect the sums themselves, and nothing but the balance after the Imperial charges have been paid will come to us. Why, then, since the sum collected—£6,180,000—is so very nearly equal, being within £20,000 of the sum collected for Customs and Excise, should you insist, in addition, in appointing a Receiver General to receive all the other Revenue derived from Irish sources, including the rent which it is proposed the Irish Authority shall collect? Would it not be a sufficient security if you had a lien upon the rent collected by the Irish Authority in the event of the Customs and Excise not proving sufficient for the purpose of meeting the annual Imperial charge of Great Britain? The appointment of a Receiver General would be most offensive in Ireland. It would be an indication that you cannot trust us to hand over to you even so small a sum as £20,000 as an annual payment to which you are entitled. If you were to adopt the suggestion that I made, you would not only have the annual amount collected by the Customs and Excise, but you would have, in addition, the security of the rents annually payable, and all the Revenue which will be levied by the Irish Government. It appears to me that you will have abundant security in these sums, and that there is no necessity to set up an offensive object and source of irritation in the shape of a Receiver General for the purpose of collecting the Irish Revenue before the Irish Government can touch a single penny. In addition to this, Mr. Speaker, there is every reason to suppose that the receipts from Customs and Excise will more than balance the Imperial charges, because we will put in, on the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, a claim for the reduction of the Imperial contribution. I have every hope, as I expressed in the debate upon the introduction of that measure, that when the time comes for considering the details of the Bill in Committee, that contribution will be largely decreased, and that, in fact, a sufficient sum will be collected by yourselves, in your own way, for the purpose of paying the expenses of this and the preceding Bill. There is another matter to which I should also like to direct the attention of the House, and that is the question of town parks. The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister explained that it was not intended to include town parks within the scope of this Bill. If this Bill should turn out to be a satisfactory one, it would be a great misfortune not to include the purchase of town parks within its purview. Their purchase could not add very largely to the amount of money it would be necessary to advance. To a considerable extent this is a grievance in Ireland, although not a very extensive one, it is true, but still a grievance very much felt by a class of most respectable men—namely, the traders in the Irish towns; and it is a question which the Prime Minister promised, or held out some hopes to us in former debates, that he would be able to meet at some future time. If this Bill goes on, I certainly think that the question of town parks is a small affair which might be attended to. With regard to the Bill generally, I should wish to test its main merits by an examination of the clauses which direct the Land Commission how they are to try and value the landlord's interest in the estate offered for sale. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that the normal number of years' purchase fixed will be 20 of the net rental, and he explained that the net rental was to be the judicial rent, or in cases where judicial rent was not fixed, such as leaseholds and so forth, the standard of the judicial rent in the particular electoral division. The net rent, he thought, might be calculated by an average reduction of 20 per cent off the judical rent. He further explained that that was to be the normal—I suppose, by normal, he meant the usual—method adopted in the case of the better class of holdings, and those coming next to the better class of holdings; but in regard to the smaller holdings, other directions will be given to the Land Commission, and they would not only be permitted, but be directed, to adopt a lower standard not fixed in the Bill, but a standard left to their discretion regarding the number of years' purchase in given cases. It must be obvious to everyone that on the nature of these clauses must depend, to a large extent, the efficiency of the Bill for settling this question. It will be impossible for anyone to undertake to express a positive opinion on the matter until he has carefully considered these clauses as they now stand in the draft of the Bill, and the prospect of being able to amend them in Committee. I would desire to lay down this principle, and it is a principle that I have always maintained in the discussions we had in the last Parliament with regard to this question of Land Purchase. I agree with the hon. Member for the Central Division of Edinburgh (Mr. J. Wilson), that our undertakings in regard to these two Bills should be entered into, on both sides, with a determination to keep them, and with a determination that they shall be kept; and if any attempt is made hereafter to repudiate them, that they shall be enforced. Any other view, intention, or idea on the part of any Irishman would be most dishonest. I should say, however, that if the payments required from the tenants under this Bill, in discharge of instalments and the annual payment of interest under the Bill, are such as the tenant would have a fair chance—taking one year with another, and having regard to the very depressed condition of agriculture in Ireland—of being able to meet; if this Bill satisfies these conditions, we, the Irish Members, may confidently accept it, and give it our approval, and you English and Scotch Members may confidently support it in the firm confidence that no attempt hereafter will be made to upset the arrangement or repudiate the obligations. But if too high a price is to be given to the landlords, if their interests are to be valued at such a sum as to render it possible—I will not say probable—that the tenants might find themselves unable to meet their obligations to the State hereafter, then I do not think that we, the Irish Members, could honourably accept the measure, or that we should be justified, by any sort of regard for the interests of our constituencies, if we were to attempt to do so. Certainly I do not think that English and Scotch Members would support the measure under such circumstances. But if we accept this measure, we should be most dishonest if we attempted to repudiate or to upset any arrangement which was entered into deliberately between the freely-elected Representatives of the people of the three countries. Then we should also bear in mind another question connected with this subject. I do not think that either side to the dispute—either the landlords on the one side, or the tenants on the other—should be too exacting. I think they should endeavour to meet each other. It is evident that a fair solution on the lines of some Land Purchase Bill would materially facilitate the settlement of the question of Irish autonomy. It will, in my opinion, remove one of the principal barriers to its settlement which has hitherto existed on the part of a certain class in Ireland—the landlords. I doubt very much whether Irish landlords, as a rule, will appreciate very much the attitude which appears to have been taken up by the Conservative Party to-night on this question of Land Purchase, or whether they will thank very much their self-chosen champions for flying in the face of the largest offer which has yet been made to the Irish landlords to enable them to extricate themselves from their position when they find that they are to be dragged at the tail of the Tory Party, and that, on the principle of any stick being good enough to beat a dog with, the interests of the Irish landlords are to be sacrificed in order that a weapon may be shaped for flagellating the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party. I am inclined to think that many of the Irish landlords will feel considerable doubt as to the wisdom of their self-constituted champions, and that, perhaps, even the ardour of those hon. Gentlemen who term themselves the Ulster Members will be somewhat cooled when they see the dismay which their opposition to this Bill awakens in the breasts of the poorer Irish landlords. But our view is not that we should make a Party question of this measure. Our view is that we should approach it with a give-and-take line of action—that we should give way as much as we can, so that by yielding as much as possible of the interests of the tenants of Ireland, provided we do not unduly load or overweight them, and by yielding so much to the interests of the landlords as will enable us to clear the decks, we may in the end arrive at a satisfactory settlement of the question of Irish autonomy, and also be enabled to settle once for all this troublesome and difficult question of Irish Land Purchase. I believe, if the Conservative Party should succeed in throwing out this Bill, that the offer will not be repeated in a hurry, and that it will be exceedingly probable that the attempt of the Prime Minister to let them down as easily as he can by the help of English credit will not be renewed; that the Government of Ireland Bill by itself will then be pressed forward; and that, even if the Lords should throw it out at once, both the Irish and the English landlords will see reason before many months have elapsed to repent their ill-advised action.

MR. MATHER (Salford, S.): Before the debate closes, I desire the House to understand that the great county of Lancashire is not all of one voice and mind in reference to this important question. No doubt, the policy of the Government has been opposed very forcibly by the noble Marquess the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington), not only in this House, but upon a public platform in another place, and it has also been opposed in a very loud voice by the hon. Member for the borough of Burnley (Mr. Rylands), another Lancashire Member; but, nevertheless, I wish the House and the Irish Members to understand that Lancashire on this question is by no means of one mind. Although it is perfectly true that hon. Members opposite may claim for the moment to have a majority in the county of Lancaster, yet I must remind them that the victory they achieved there was owing almost entirely to the co-operation they received from the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his friends. Hon. Gentlemen opposite must understand that we on this side intend most honestly, earnestly, cordially, and conscientiously to support the Prime Minister in the great efforts he has made, before the close of his great career, to unite in the true spirit of unity the people of Great Britain and Ireland. Hon. Gentlemen opposite must not suppose that that spirit and feeling have not been exhibited largely in the county of Lancaster, both among the county constituencies as well as those of the boroughs. No one regrets more deeply and sincerely than myself the dark cloud which has come over this side of the House in consequence of the division which has occurred between the Liberal Leaders; but I hope that I see an indication of a silver lining to that cloud in the tone of the speech of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), especially in the remarks he made just before he closed his speech in reference to the regard he entertains for the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, who is so deservedly honoured by the whole of the Liberal Party. I should not be surprised to find during long adjournment of the House, when the country will have to discuss the matter on many platforms, that the right hon. Gentleman will feel it his duty to draw somewhat more nearly to the Prime Minister, and make his action in harmony with the peroration of his speech. An attempt has been made to prove to hon. Members from Ireland that this proposal would involve great hardships upon them, and that it would be impossible in future to command the assent of the Irish people. That is an argument which follows very much the line taken by the Leader of the Opposition when he tried, with regard to the Government of Ireland Bill, to minimize the advantages which the Irish people would receive under it. I have come to the conclusion that both the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham and the Leader of the Opposition were trying to prove too much. Liberal Members must bear in mind that, after they have consulted their own consciences on this question, they have only to satisfy hon. Members from Ireland, who, in the course of this Session at least, have shown something of the sober and serious earnestness of responsible statesmen. The Irish Members have endeavoured to meet these propositions in a reasonable manner, and they have declared by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), their Leader, that they accept these two Bills, not with a view of obtaining further concessions, but in order to conciliate their opponents and preserve the unity of the Empire. If this Bill becomes law, it will be no longer possible for the enemies of Great Britain to point to a rotten spot, and say that the sympathies of Ireland are not with us. Wherever Englishmen have appeared in any part of the world Irishmen have been found acting shoulder to shoulder with them, displaying the same courage and determination. But the Union which hon. Members opposite pretend to prize so much has never been a real Union at all. I care nothing for an Act of Union which is a mere document, because no parchment provisions can bring about mutual goodwill between the two countries. The only Union that can exist between people in any part of the world is a Union based upon common objects, mutual goodwill, and a determination to stand or fall together. You may bring about a so-called peace; but so long as it is not a real peace you will have nothing but strife and disturbances. The cry of hon. Gentlemen opposite for the maintenance of the Union and the integrity of the Empire is only an attempt to catch votes, while Ireland continues as a difficulty in our midst. In my opinion, we are on the eve of great Constitutional changes which will bring about mutual goodwill. I have no faith in those politicians or in that Party who declare that Irishmen are incapable of keeping their word, or of doing that which all countries responsible to mankind for their acts are incapable of doing. Self-preservation is the first law of nature. All that this Bill proposes is that some of the powers of the Imperial Parliament should be delegated to the Irish Parliament, and that the Irish people should be trusted with a certain degree of self-government. We have never yet tried as a panacea for the wrongs and injuries of Ireland the plan of conferring responsible government upon the Irish people. I believe it is that principle which alone can give strength to Ireland, and it is by that tie alone that an indissoluble connection will be cemented between the two countries. I trust that during the Recess the question will be discussed on every platform with a real desire to find the true solution of the crying evils from which we have all so long suffered. I do not expect from hon. Gentlemen opposite much sympathy in the remarks I have made. Those hon. Gentlemen should, however, recollect that they are ever on the losing side. They are not known in history for having removed any of the disabilities from which any class of the people have suffered. The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler) has referred to the Prime Minister in language which, if the hon. Member did not accompany his words with that genial expression of good humour which always characterizes him, I should have thought was extremely insulting language to apply to a man who had proved himself to be not only a distinguished patriot, but one who had done more for the people of Ireland than any man living. I am perfectly certain of this—that whatever the Liberal Party have done in the past has been for the benefit of the whole country. If we appear for a moment to be disunited, I believe it is possible that during the discussion which must take place in the next few weeks we shall be able to come once more to a common standing ground, and that we shall be able to offer to Parliament a solution of this great Irish problem; putting aside all minor differences, relying on the Prime

Minister with full confidence, and presenting ourselves to the country once more as a really united Party. In that case I think we shall be able to give that support to the Prime Minister which will enable him to carry these very wise measures through Parliament.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West): At this late hour of the night I will not detain the House for more than a few minutes; but when I heard the hon. Member for Salford (Mr. Mather) say that we are perfectly ready to believe all the assurances which hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway make, I felt bound to regard that statement with some reservation. It is only reasonable and right that we should accept the statements which hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway have made themselves; and that is the reason why hon. Members sitting on this side of the Gangway are absolutely and diametrically opposed to hon. Gentlemen sitting below. Hon. Gentlemen sitting below the Gangway have for their great object, and I think they will not deny that they have said so—the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) will not I think deny it—they have for their great object, their main object, and their sole object, the bringing about of a separation between England and Ireland. [*Cries of* "No!"] Then what was the meaning of the words of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork when, a very short time ago, he stated, and stated distinctly in this House—"Let us get this plan of Home Rule. Never mind the details; we can fill up the details afterwards." [*Laughter.*] It is all very well for hon. Gentlemen to laugh; but this is no laughing matter—I am as anxious to secure the interests of my country, and perhaps a good deal more anxious than many hon. Gentlemen who have not a very large stake in Ireland. My main object is to maintain the honour, the dignity, and the welfare of the United Kingdom; and I will venture to say that by establishing a Parliament on College Green that object will be entirely frustrated. A bribe has been held out to-night. [*Cries of* "No!"] Yes; it is a bribe, and the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister would never have proposed a measure such as that which he has proposed to-night if he could have trusted the Irish Members to carry out that which he knows ought to be carried out in the interests of the landowning class in Ireland. I would ask hon. Members below the Gangway whether it is not their object to destroy landlordism in Ireland? Has it not been their object to turn the landlords out of Ireland? [*Cries of* "No!"] No; why, your great object has been to take away their property from them. Your desire has been to reduce the land to prairie value, and not pay the landlords the full value of their property; and I believe there is a noble Lord who, as a Member of the present Government—I mean Lord Spencer—never would have consented to concede Home Rule unless it was accompanied by such a measure as that which has been introduced to-night for the payment—and the fair and reasonable payment—if this Bill contains, which I doubt, a fair and reasonable payment—of the Irish landlords. I believe it will not be denied that the great object of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant is to get the Irish Members out of Westminster. That was the principal object he had in view when he accepted Office as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. [MR. JOHN MORLEY: No.] It was the great object of the right hon. Gentleman that no Irishman should have a seat in this House. Is that not so? The right hon. Gentleman cannot deny it, and he did not deny it the other day, when he made a very lame and halting statement with regard to the character of the Irish Members in this House. The right hon. Gentleman has stated most distinctly that so long as the Irish Members have a seat in this House there will be no business done. The right hon. Gentleman said that at Chelmsford; indeed, it was the pith and marrow of his statement, as far as I was able to understand it; and to gain that object he is willing to sacrifice a Union which has been the greatest blessing to the country; a Union which has made us the great nation we are; and a Union which has brought into our ranks from all classes in Ireland men who have in the highest manner distinguished themselves. Even the Prime Minister himself said that the two countries are so closely entwined together that they cannot be separated without a great wrench. The Prime Minister, in introducing this Bill to-night, is going to do that which, if his proposal is accepted, will be the greatest wrench that Ireland could possibly sustain. He proposes to get rid of the landlords of Ireland, and destroy all that capital has ever done for Ireland. Nothing that Irishmen can do themselves will succeed in attracting capital to their shores; and, therefore, I venture to say that getting rid of the landlords and the landowning class out of Ireland is one of the worst things that could happen to the country. Personally, I am opposed to the whole scheme of the Prime Minister. I have said that wherever I have been, and I say it again to-night. I am one of those who have the best wishes for, and the greatest anxiety to promote, the welfare of Ireland. I feel, however, that coercion would never have been applied in that country unless the Irish people had disobeyed the law. When Irishmen disobey the law; when the ordinary law fails; when juries refuse to convict; when it becomes necessary to change the venue, then, I say, it is time in any civilized country to introduce measures for enforcing the law. It is only because the present Government have not done their duty, but have allowed the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends, many of whom I respect for the honest and straightforward statements they make—to disobey the law that this measure has been brought in. I desired the other night—and I several times rose for that purpose — to enter my protest against the statement of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that he could only wish to renew the Arms Act in order to repress the loyal population of the North of Ireland; but I failed to obtain the opportunity of doing so. I thought that the right hon. Gentleman had made a statement which he would afterwards bitterly repent; because, with all her faults, the North of Ireland has been loyal to this country for generations, and we are bound by every means in our power to protect that loyal population from any disaster which is likely to befall them at the instance of any other part of the country. So long as I have a seat in this House, so long as I have a voice in it, while I wish to help Ireland by every legitimate means in my power, I shall never hesitate to express my view that the first duty of every man who has his country's interest at heart is to maintain the Union between the two Islands, and to do nothing in the slightest degree to weaken that Union, which has so long been a source of strength to both countries.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I do not intend to say anything on the general question after the speeches which have been made to-night; but, as the Representative of a county which is largely owned by London Companies, I should like to have a distinct explanation of the views of the Government towards those London Companies with regard to this Bill. Almost half of my constituents live on land which was confiscated 250 years ago, and given over in trust to a number of gentlemen resident in London for the small sum of money they had raised to help the armaments of this country at that time. We hold in Ireland that these Guilds have entirely forfeited their trust by the way in which they have racked and harried their tenants; and surely we are not now going to give millions of money out of the pockets of the British taxpayer to these guzzlers of champagne and turtle soup. I trust that we are not going to take away the money of the Irish people and of the British taxpayer in order to devote it to fattening the Aldermen of the City of London. I think, therefore, that the County of Londonderry is entitled to receive very special treatment under the Bill. I do not intend to say a word as to the general principles of the Bill; I intend to wait until I have seen the Bill itself; but we have good reason to be surprised that there should have been no recognition whatever of that peculiar form of landlordism which exists in the County Derry, and which is represented by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London. After the Report of the London Guilds, and the long inquiry into the resources of the Corporation of London, I should not have been surprised if the Government had touched upon that subject in this Bill, seeing that some of the staunchest supporters of the Prime Minister are to be found among the Presbyterians in the North of Ireland. Those men have given their time and the sweat of their brow to making the land fertile, and in carrying out important improvements; but the only return they get from the London Companies is to be rack-rented and harried on every occasion. I asked a question on Thursday last of the Chief Secretary for Ireland with regard to a certain school in the County of Londonderry—not a Catholic, but a Protestant school. I asked the right hon. Gentleman whether anything was going to be done in the shape of bringing pressure to bear upon the London Companies to induce them to convert that miserable hovel, in which 80 children are educated, into something like a decent habitation? The answer I received was that the Government, on their part, were doing their best; but that the sum which the Drapers' Company spent upon that school, which is upon their estate, was the munificent sum of £10 per annum. The City Companies spend comparatively little in proportion to the rent upon their estates. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] I know, of course, that the Irish Society spend considerable sums at Coleraine; but they are bound to do that. I admit, however, that, as far as the Irish Society is concerned, it does something there; but, as far as the general body of the London Companies is concerned, they well deserve their name of the "Salters" and the "Skinners." There is a very strong belief entertained in the County of Londonderry that whatever England owes by way of compensation or restitution to the general body of landlords in Ireland for being her garrison in the North it owes nothing whatever to the Corporation of the City of London, who have done nothing for her, except drink champagne at her expense. [Sir ROBERT FOWLER: They have established private schools.] Yes; probably £10 a-year, like the Drapers' Company. I maintain that the position of the London Companies is a total different one, as landlords, from that of the general body of proprietors in Ireland; and I think it is really time that some distinction should be drawn between the different classes of landlords in Ireland. The Government do not want to reduce anyone to penury. But it cannot be pretended that any of the young ladies in the families of the London Companies will have to go out to teach the piano, and no one would ever dream of engaging the worthy Aldermen of the City of London as governesses anywhere. I trust we shall have some serious intimation from the Government that this long-continued iniquity—because it is nothing less than an iniquity, in the face of the Charters granted to these Bodies—shall not be allowed to continue. Of course, this is not the place for entering into the general question; but we have strong legal opinion that these Companies have long since forfeited all right and title to the estates they hold, in consequence of not having kept the terms of their trust. Their Charters ought no longer to be recognized; and, therefore, on all these grounds, these gentlemen should be boldly divorced from the property. I do not say that the tenants in all cases should have the lands of the Companies without paying something for them; but I think there is no part of Ireland where such vast improvements have been made by the Irish tenants as on the estates of the London Companies. They have, I may say, brought the soil into a state of fertility, and something ought to be done to place them in a better position than they now occupy. The Government certainly ought not to allow the system of landlordism represented by these Companies to continue. I therefore trust that in the present Bill a strong line of demarcation will be drawn between the landlords who exist in the flesh and the landlords who exist only in the Seals and Charters of the City of London, and who have done absolutely nothing for the country, except, perhaps, to contribute by their evictions towards the poorhouse and the gaol.

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I think it is important that the House should have the Bill in their hands as soon as possible; and, therefore, for the convenience of hon. Members, I would like to know when it is probable that the Bill will be circulated?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Bill is in a very forward condition indeed, and I have great hopes that it will be in the hands of hon. Members by Monday morning.

Question put.

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. GLADSTONE, Mr. Secretary CHILDERS, Mr. JOHN MORLEY, and Mr. ATTORNEY GENERAL.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 193.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

INFANTS BILL.—[Bill 139.]

(*Mr. Attorney General, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Bryce.*)

committee. [*Progress* 15*th April.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Short title) *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (On death of father, mother to be guardian alone or jointly with others).

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.), in moving, as an Amendment, in page 1, line 9, after the words "on the death of the father of an infant," to insert—

> "And in case the father shall have died prior to the passing of this Act, then from and after the passing of this Act,"

said: The clause as it stands applies only to cases in which the father happens to die after the passing of the measure, and the Amendment which I propose will make it retrospective. That will be in perfect harmony with the leading principle of the Bill. The mother, if a widow, would at once become the guardian of the children, either alone, when no guardian has been appointed, or jointly with any guardian appointed by the father. I need hardly say that there a very large number of cases to which the Amendment would apply—cases in which the father is dead already. It may be objected that this is retrospective legislation; but I should like to explain very shortly to the Committee that in reality this is not retrospective legislation in the ordinary acceptation of the term, because if that term could on any principle be applied to the proposal I make, nevertheless the proposal itself is not objectionable on the ground on which *ex post facto* legislation is usually regarded as objectionable, inasmuch as there are no existing arrangements which could possibly be upset, and which, having been made upon the faith of the existing law, it would not be right or fair to change. Wherever an arrangement has been entered into or an interest created, that arrangement or interest would stand. For example, if a deed has been executed in accordance with the due solemnities prescribed by law before the decease of the father, it would neither be right, fair, nor just in the interest of the parties claiming under such deed that other solemnities imposed by the law should affect the validity of the deed. I would, however, point out to the Committee that no such case could arise under this Amendment, because there is no person whose interests can be legitimately affected by making the mother the guardian of her children. The only true interest to be looked to is the interest of the infant itself, and that interest is just as strong in the case of children who have already lost their father as in the case of children whose father dies afterwards. It cannot be said that if the change in the law now proposed had been made, that anybody would have acted otherwise than he will act under the altered state of the law. It cannot be said that if a father had known that his widow would be appointed guardian of his child he would not have died at all. That would not be in his power, and really I can see no other objection to the change which I propose. The Amendment would not make the legislation retrospective, and I trust my right hon. and learned Friend will not offer any objection to my proposition.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 1, line 9, after "infant," insert "and in case the father shall have died prior to the passing of this Act, then from and after the passing of this Act."—(*Mr. Donald Crawford.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I think the Amendment of the hon. Member would be a great improvement to the Bill. It would affect no paternal interest or right.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I think this is a matter on which the Committee should receive a little more information than has been given. We can understand that the alteration is more requisite with regard to Scotland than England; but it is a serious thing to introduce what is, after all, retrospective matter, and I am not disposed to assent to the Amendment.

Question put, and *agreed to;* words *inserted.*

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I think the object of the Amendment I am about to move will be clear to the Committee.

Of course, when we refer to anything of the neuter gender we use the form of pronoun which corresponds. But when the Committee consider that the word "it," which is used sometimes with regard to young children, will, in this Act, apply to young persons nearly 21 years of age, I think hon. Members will see that the expression is hardly appropriate to the clause. I therefore propose to use the masculine term, which includes, in these cases, the feminine.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 10, to leave out "its," and insert "his."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'its' stand part of the Clause."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I am not myself sure that the word which the hon. Member proposes to strike out is the best that can be used, and I suggest that the Amendment should be withdrawn, and then I will move to add the word "the," which I think will get rid of the difficulty.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 10, to leave out "its" and insert "the."—(*Mr. Bryce.*)

Question, "That the word 'its' stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'the' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. INCE (Islington, E.): The Amendment I am about to move will make the clause run thus—

> "On the death of the father of an infant the mother, if surviving, shall be the guardian, and in such case any appointment by the father, by will or otherwise, under the Act twelfth Charles the Second, chapter twenty-four, or in Ireland under the Act of the Irish Parliament fourteenth and fifteenth Charles the Second, chapter nineteen, or otherwise shall be of no effect."

The object of that Amendment is to carry out the view which I have always entertained with reference to this Bill, that there should be no double control either of children or of families; that the father, in his lifetime, should have the guiding and controlling hand, and that when either parent is dead the survivor should be the guardian of the children. I suppose that hon. Members who really wish to see women placed on the same, or perhaps a little stronger, footing with men, will be willing to accept this Amendment. It is said that perhaps the mother may marry again, and it would be inconvenient that she should be guardian under the circumstances. Well, Sir, I do not wish to say anything against the weaker part of humanity. As far as my experience goes, I should say that the mother surviving is often more capable of taking care of the children than the father surviving who marries again. I would rather trust any children to their mother under the circumstances of a second marriage than I would to a step-mother. Therefore, I think that, as far as second marriage goes, there is more reason for allowing the mother to be guardian than there is in the case of the father. The other objection which I have heard stated is that the mother may be an improper person, and that, therefore, it is desirable that the father should have power to appoint a guardian. But then, again, the father may be an improper person—we have heard of such things before now. But there is reasonable protection against that objection in the clause of the Bill which allows the Court to interfere. Under the circumstances, I ask the Committee to assent to this Amendment, because I believe, if we are to deal with this subject at all, we had better do so effectually.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 1, line 10, leave out all after "guardian" to the end of the Clause, and insert "and in such case any appointment by the father, by will or otherwise, under the Act twelfth Charles the Second, chapter twenty-four, or in Ireland, under the Act of the Irish Parliament fourteenth and fifteenth Charles the Second, chapter nineteen or otherwise, shall be of no effect."—(*Mr. Ince.*)

Mr. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead): I hope the Government are not prepared to accept this Amendment. It always appears to me that the mother requires generally more support or more control under the circumstances than the father—she is very apt to give way.

Amendment *negatived.*

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): The clause proposes that the Court may, from time to time, appoint a guardian or guardians to act jointly with the mother. Now, the word "may" in an Act of Parliament is sometimes very nearly equivalent to "shall;" and, as that is not the intention of this clause, I beg to move the addition of words which will make it clear what that intention is.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 14, after "may" insert "if it shall think fit."—(*Mr. Donald Crawford.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I do not think that anyone would maintain that "may," in this case, means "must;" and, therefore, I do not consider that the clause at all stands in need of the words which the hon. Member proposes to introduce.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I must say that I hardly expect to meet with any public act in which "may" means "must." Still, the question might arise, and it might be supposed that the word implied the duty of the Court. My hon. Friend proposes to obviate that by agreeing to the Amendment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Mother may appoint guardian, certain cases).

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I propose to leave out the words "deed or," and I do so by way of challenging an explanation of the clause. The clause provides that the mother of an infant, "by deed or will," may appoint a person to its guardianship, and that seems to me a very strong measure to allow. You must remember that these deeds in ordinary cases would be irrevocable, and that the appointment may be made during the lifetime of the woman's own husband. That is carrying the thing rather too far. No doubt it will be right to allow it to be done by will.

Amendment proposed, to omit the words "deed or."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): The words of this clause were carefully considered when the Bill was before the House on a previous occasion; and it was felt that it would be an advantage to give the mother power to do this in both ways. The hon. Member will be aware that by testamentary instrument a deed of this kind could be revoked.

MR. TOMLINSON: I cannot understand the doctrine that a testamentary instrument can revoke a deed. Generally in this country a deed is irrevocable. But I desire to put this to the Committee. Is there any reason for giving a mother power to appoint a guardian by deed? I cannot see any. Rights may be given to her in her marriage settlement no doubt, and rights may be given to her by will; but is a mother able to say what is going to happen after her death. It seems to me the proper way to do this thing is to confine the matter to the will, striking out the deed. If I get any support I shall certainly persevere with my Amendment.

MR. WESTLAKE (Essex, Romford): According to the present law, the father of an infant has power to appoint a guardian by will or deed, and no inconvenience has arisen from his having that power. Therefore, I do not see anything unreasonable in this proposal, especially as the Bill tends to assimilate the positions of the father and mother.

MR. RAIKES (Cambridge University): The hon. and learned Gentleman who has just spoken assumes an absolute equality between the father and mother in this matter. I do not read the Bill in that sense. As I understand it, the Amendment introduced into the Bill in the other House last year is one which practically gives to the mother the conditional right of making an appointment—of making that which is, in point of fact, a provisional appointment. I would ask whether the words of this clause, giving power to make this appointment by deed, do not give an unconditional power, which, as I understand it, the Bill, as at present drawn, is not intended to give? I should like to hear from the author of the Bill some repudiation of the doctrine that has been laid down by the hon. Member, otherwise the Committee would do well to support the Amendment.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): The right hon. Gentleman is quite right in supposing that this Bill does not give anything like equality. It favours the father throughout in almost every clause.

MR. TOMLINSON: I think this is an important point. The instruction which some of us received years ago in the principles of law rather tended in this matter to the view that it is not always an advantage to have a guardian appointed by deed. A woman is supposed to be, and in fact ought to be, under the influence of her husband to a great extent; and it is possible that, in many cases, it might be desirable that certain persons should be appointed guardians to take the care of an infant in the event of the death of the wife. Supposing a wife were induced to make an irrevocable appointment by deed—[Mr. Bryce: It is not irrevocable.] It generally is irrevocable.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): This Bill is intended to apply to Scotland; and I would point out that if deed means something different to will or testamentary writing, in the respect that it is in all its parts irrevocable, the use of the word in the measure will introduce into the law of Scotland something entirely new in favour of the nominee of the mother. At present, according to Scotch law, the thing must be done by testamentary writing. If "deed" means something different, and if that is to be introduced into the law, it gives something as to the mother which does not exist as to the father.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 4 (Powers of guardian) *agreed to.*

Clause 5 (Court may make orders as to custody).

Mr. EDWARDS-MOSS (Lancashire, S.W., Widnes): I beg to move in page 2, line 14, after "infant," to insert "and the right of access thereto of either parent." I suppose that the question of the custody of any infant will arise chiefly, if not only, in a case in which the parents are unfortunately living apart from each other. I think that when an order is made under this clause, giving the custody of an infant to one parent, the Court should be specially authorized to make such order as it may think fit for the other parent to have reasonable opportunity for seeing the child. I am quite sure that where such estrangement between the parents is the result, not of any grave delinquency, but of some lamentable and serious misunderstanding, it would not be the wish of the Government to exclude the mother from the right of seeing and conversing with her own child.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 14, after "infant," insert "and the right of access thereto of either parent."—(*Mr. Edwards-Moss.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I would support the insertion of these words in this clause. They are practically the law of Scotland at the present moment; and I am able to say, from my own experience, that the possession by the Court of such a power as this sometimes has the best possible effect, leading not infrequently to the reconciliation of parents who, if left to wrangle over the question of access to their children, would probably go on wrangling to the end of their days. In such cases we sometimes find that where the Court intervenes and gives reasonable opportunities of access happy conclusions are very frequently brought about.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I am not quite certain that the Amendment is necessary, because I rather think that the order regarding the custody of an infant would deal with the question of the right of access. At the same time, we are much obliged to the hon. Member (Mr. Edwards-Moss) for calling our attention to this point, and for proposing words which will put the matter beyond doubt. I have much pleasure in accepting the Amendment.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I really think we ought, where we can, to avoid putting unnecessary words in the Act. I appeal to the experience of anyone who knows anything about the custody of children, whether it is not customary for the Court of Chancery to make provision for access to children? It is a common thing to do that in every order.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Remaining Clauses *agreed to.*

Mr. INCE (Islington, E.): I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause:—

"In any case where a decree for judicial separation, or a decree either nisi or absolute for divorce, shall be pronounced, the Court pronouncing such decree may thereby declare the parent by reason of whose misconduct such decree is made a person unfit to have the custody of the children (if any) of the marriage; and in such case, the parent so pronounced to be unfit shall, if he or she shall survive the other parent, have no right to the custody or guardianship of such children, either under this Act or otherwise, and shall not possess, or be capable of exercising, any of the powers or rights by this Act conferred on a surviving parent."

The object of the clause is to provide for a case which might arise if this Bill became law—a case where there has been a judicial separation, or a decree for a divorce. Supposing such a decree given, the Court of Divorce would have the custody of the children on behalf of the innocent parent; but on the death of that innocent parent the rights of the surviving parent would again come into force. The Court, on pronouncing a decree, may, if it thinks fit—for it is not binding—declare the person by reason of whose misconduct the decree is made to be an unfit person to have the custody of the children. If that is put in the decree, as it will be only in bad cases, then, on the death of the innocent father or mother, as the case may be, the advantages given by this Act would not devolve upon those who should not have them.

New clause (Guardianship in case of divorce or judicial separation,)—(*Mr. Ince,*)—*brought up*, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not object to the clause being read a second time; but I would venture to point out that the latter part of it would have a result which I can hardly suppose the hon. and learned Member intends. The first part would be consistent with the Act; but, under the latter part, such a degree of unfitness would not only apply to persons declared unfit to any statutory right or rights given for the first time by this Act, but would fix a permanent disability on that person, who might be the father, for the exercise of the guardianship that he would have as a father under the ordinary law. You might have a case where the wife dies, and because of his having been guilty of some matrimonial offence the father may have lost the right of custody of his children, which may be given by the wife to somebody else. Such a man may have become quite respectable, and yet the clause as it stands will deprive him permanently of any right of guardianship over his children. I would suggest to the hon. and learned Gentleman that all he can desire would be effected by stopping at the words, "guardianship of such children under this Act," leaving out the word "either" and the words—

"Or otherwise, and shall not possess, or be capable of exercising, any of the powers or rights by this Act conferred on a surviving parent."

It seems to me that the clause as it stands would go further than the hon. and learned Member intends.

MR. INCE: The clause, as it stands, embodies my intention, and the intention of those persons on whose suggestion I drew it up. If the parent is unfit to have the benefits of this Act, surely he will be unfit to have the benefits of any other right under the Common Law. Why should he be deprived of these modern benefits, and not be deprived of similar benefits that already exist under similar statutes? You would take them away from the mother if she does wrong, but would leave them with the father under older statutes to be carried into effect by him if he does wrong. I must say I prefer the clause as it stands.

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I wish to ask the Lord Advocate, or the hon. Member who has charge of the Bill, a question as to this matter of misconduct or unfitness. I can quite understand that adultery on the part of the woman, or cruelty and adultery on the part of the man, would be sufficient ground for interference; but suppose a case of judicial separation, or of desertion only. Would it not be well to provide some safeguards, in order to show that it is only for certain real crimes, such as cruelty or adultery, that a parent ought to be deprived of the guardianship of the children?

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I think the misconduct should be such as to render the person unfit to have the guardianship of the children. But I only intended the clause to be read a second time, and then I will move an Amendment upon it.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): I suggest that the word "declared" in line 6 of the clause should be substituted for the word "pronounced."

Amendment proposed, in new Clause, line 6, leave out "pronounced," in order to insert "declared."—(*Mr. Bryce.*)

Question, "That the word 'pronounced' stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'declared' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in new Clause, line 7, leave out the word "either."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question, "That the word 'either' stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Amendment proposed, in new Clause, leave out all the words after "Act" in line 8.—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the Clause, as amended, be added to the Bill," put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Monday* next.

HIGHWAYS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*Mr. Duckham, Mr. More, Mr. Thomas Blake.*)

[BILL 149.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read,

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Duckham.*)

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I understand, Mr. Speaker, that in the last Parliament an Act was passed giving the Highway Authorities in five Southern counties the right to lop the trees and hedges by the roadside at the expense of the ratepayers. Previous to the passing of that Act this work devolved upon the proprietors of the property. I desire that in all the rest of the country, at any rate, the liability of keeping the hedges by the roadside trimmed should remain with the owners, and not be put upon the public. I quite agree with my hon. Friend in charge of this Bill (Mr. Duckham) in the action he took in the last Parliament, because the lanes in the four Southern counties are very deep and narrow, very damp, and very difficult to keep in repair. But the roads of the rest of the country are different. They are high; the wind blows freely upon them. Mischief does not arise from high hedges; and we think that the owners of the property should be called upon to bear the expense of keeping the hedges in order. I beg to move that we go into Committee upon this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House will, upon this day six months, resolve itself into the said Committee,"—(*Mr. Brunner,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. DUCKHAM (Herefordshire, Leominster): The hon. Gentleman the Member for Northwich (Mr. Brunner) has said that in the counties to which the Act of last Session was made applicable the roads are narrow and deep, but that the roads in other parts of the Kingdom are not so. I happen to be the Chairman of a Highway Board in my county, having jurisdiction over upwards of 300 miles of road. We have under our care a great many narrow and deep roads. The Bill does not make it compulsory upon the Highway Boards to keep the hedges in order, but only enables the representatives of the ratepayers to do what they feel to be proper in the interests of their constituents for the free admission of the sun and air to dry the roads, and to prevent those who travel along them being subjected to the nuisance of briars and brambles extending, as they often do, a considerable distance over the roads. In the days of turnpikes the Turnpike Trusts Commissioners used to trim the hedges on the road side. Frequently the footways on the sides of the roads are overgrown by the hedges, and the public are precluded from using them. I trust this Bill will meet with the approval of the House.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 59; Noes 38: Majority 21.—(Div. List, No. 75.)

Main Question put, *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Short title).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Brunner.*)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. STANSFELD) (Halifax): I hope the Committee will not pass this Motion. The Bill has come down from a Select Committee, and I intend to move an Amendment in the 2nd clause, which, I believe, will meet the objection of the hon. Member. The system has been found to work well in five of the Southern counties; and I understand that it is the law in Scotland at the present time.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): After the statement of my right hon. Friend that he will move an Amendment in the 2nd clause, which will carry out my point, I will withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Powers to highway authority to prune hedges, &c.)

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): Has the right hon. Gentleman considered that the effect of the clause is to throw upon the ratepayers that which is now a burden upon each owner? I do not see why the private owner should be relieved in this matter; and I, for one, shall vote against the Bill. That is the reason why we have opposed this measure.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND) (Cornwall, Launceston): May I say, with regard to this Bill, that some time ago I was asked by the surveyors of several Highway Boards in the West of England to introduce a Bill to give their Boards permission to carry out what they had been actually doing for years past? Therefore, I brought in a Bill on these lines for the West of England last year. It had been suddenly found that these practices, which had been carried on for years, were illegal, and the waywardens were being surcharged for acting in a manner which had the full consent of the ratepayers.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID: I do not think that answers the question, because the hon. Member (Mr. Acland) tells us that he passed a Bill for his own district last year. That, however, is no reason why this general Act should be passed. Can he tell us of any demand for this Bill on the part of any other parts of England? If not, I shall certainly vote against it.

MR. C. T. D. ACLAND: This Bill is not asked for but by the ratepayers.

MR. BRUNNER: It may have been right to pass a Bill of Indemnity for these Highway Authorities, though it is amusing to recollect that the hon. Gentleman's father has recently been in conflict with the Highway Authorities in regard to this matter; but, although the Bill may be useful in the West of England, I do object to the additional burden it involves being placed upon the ratepayers of Cheshire.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I share the objection which my hon. Friend the Member for Northwich (Mr. Brunner) has to this Bill, and I shall certainly vote against it.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 54; Noes 50: Majority 4.—(Div. List, No. 76.)

Preamble *agreed to.*

Bill *reported*; as amended, to be considered upon *Monday* 3rd May.

WAYS AND MEANS.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.

Resolutions [April 15] *reported*, and *agreed to*:—Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Henry H. Fowler.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 190.]

MOTION.

—o—

NATIONAL DEBT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Bill to suspend for a period certain payments under "The National Debt Act, 1881," and to reduce for a like period the Permanent Annual Charge of the National Debt, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Henry H. Fowler.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 191.]

House adjourned at a quarter
before Two o'clock till
Monday next.

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LONDON: CORNELIUS BUCK AND SON, 22, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

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TO

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOLUME CCCIV.

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1886.

Explanation of the Abbreviations.

Bills, Read 1°, 2°, 3°, or 1ª, 2ª, 3ª, Read the First, Second, or Third Time.—In Speeches, 1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on the First, Second, or Third Reading.—*Amendt.*, Amendment.—*Res.*, Resolution.—*Comm.*, Committee.—*Re-Comm.*, Re-Committal.—*Rep.*, Report.—*Consid.*, Consideration.—*Adj.*, Adjournment or Adjourned.—*cl.*, Clause.—*add. cl.*, Additional Clause.—*neg.*, Negatived.—*M. Q.*, Main Question.—*O. Q.*, Original Question.—*O. M.*, Original Motion.—*P. Q.*, Previous Question.—R. P., Report Progress.—*A.*, Ayes.—*N.*, Noes.—*M.*, Majority.—*1st. Div.*, *2nd. Div.*, First or Second Division.—*l.*, Lords.—*c.*, Commons.

When in this Index a * is added to the Reading of a Bill, it indicates that no Debate took place upon that stage of the measure.

When in the Text or in the Index a Speech is marked thus *, it indicates that the Speech is reprinted from a Pamphlet or some authorized Report.

When in the Index a † is prefixed to a Name or an Office (the Member having accepted or vacated office during the Session) and to Subjects of Debate thereunder, it indicates that the Speeches on those Subjects were delivered in the speaker's private or official character, as the case may be.

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Church of Scotland—see *Scotland*

Church Patronage Bill [H.L.]
  (*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *April* 6 (No. 63)

Church Patronage Bill (*Mr. Rylands, Mr. Leatham, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Brinton*)
c. Read 2º, after long debate *April* 7, 989 [Bill 4]

Church Sites (Compulsory Powers Repeal) Bill (*Mr. Francis Powell, Mr. John Talbot, Mr. Addison*)
c. Ordered; read 1º * *April* 8 [Bill 171]

City of London — Salary of the Common Serjeant
  Questions, Mr. E. Robertson, Sir Robert Fowler; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 5, 749

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COLMAN, Mr. J. J., *Norwich*
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Colonial Department—A Permanent Emigration Department
Questions, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Baumann; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) *April* 5, 734
Emigrants to the Colonies—Assisted Passages, Question, Mr. Baumann; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) *April* 9, 1162

COLONIES—Secretary of State for (*see* GRANVILLE, Earl)

COLONIES—Under Secretary of State for (*see* MORGAN, Right Hon. G. Osborne)

Colonies—State-Directed Emigration
Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for all papers addressed to the Colonial Office during the last twelve months in favour of State-directed colonization, as well as any papers addressed to the Colonial Office requesting that official information for those who desire to become colonists should be supplied to the post offices and local authorities throughout the country" (*The Earl of Harrowby*) *April* 2, 587; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

COMMERELL, Admiral Sir J. E., *Southampton*
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Common Juries Remuneration Bill
(*Mr. Crompton, Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Eugene Wason, Sir John Swinburne, Mr. Johns*)
c. Order for 2R. discharged; Bill withdrawn, after short debate *Mar* 29, 206 [Bill 95]

Commons and Open Spaces — Hayling Common
Question, Mr. Buxton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Broadhurst) *April* 5, 752

Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 6 [Bill 165]

Commons Regulation (Stoke) Provisional Order Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 6 [Bill 164]
Read 2° * *April* 13

Commons Regulation and Inclosure (Totternhoe) Provisional Order Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 6 [Bill 166]
Read 2° * *April* 13

Companies Acts Amendment Bill
(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
c. Considered in Committee; Resolution agreed to, and reported; Bill ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 29 [Bill 158]
Read 2° * *April* 13
Committee; Report; read 3° *April* 15, 1751
l. Read 1ª * (*Earl of Dalhousie*) *April* 16 (No. 82)

Compensation for Damages Bill
(*Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Broadhurst*)
c. Considered *; read 3° *Mar* 29 [Bill 120]
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Thurlow*) *Mar* 30 (No. 50)
Read 2ª *April* 5, 721
Committee *; Report *April* 6
Read 3ª *April* 8, 1033 (No. 68)
Royal Assent *April* 16 [49 *Vict.* c. 11]

COMPTON, Lord W. G., *Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon*
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Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill
(*Earl Granville*)
l. Read 2ª; Committee negatived; read 3ª *Mar* 26, 12
Royal Assent *Mar* 29 [49 *Vict.* c. 4]

Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill
(*Earl Granville*)
l. Read 1ª * (*Earl Granville*) *Mar* 26
Read 2ª *; Committee negatived *Mar* 29
Read 3ª * *Mar* 30

Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. James Stuart, Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Burt, Mr. Henry Wilson*) [Bill 147]
c. Committee; Report; read 3° *April* 2, 645

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Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (*No.* 2) *Bill*—cont.
l. Read 1ª *(*Lord Sandhurst*) *April* 5 (No. 58)
Read 2ª, after short debate *April* 9, 1151
Committee *; Report *April* 12
Read 3ª* *April* 13
Royal Assent *April* 16 [49 *Vict.* c. 10]

Contagious Diseases (*Animals*) *Act*, 1878
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Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 6, 554, 558; *cl.* 13, 1743
Highways Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1880
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 656, 671, 674, 685, 693, 695
Poor Law (England and Wales)—Election of Guardians, Nottingham, 1621
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), 3R. 898

Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill
(*Mr. Charles James, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Stafford Howard, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Mellor*)
c. Committee—R P. *April* 1, 577 [Bill 26]
Committee; Report *April* 9, 1279
Considered; read 3º, after short debate *April* 13, 1563
l. Read 1ª* (*Lord Hobhouse*) *April* 15 (No. 76)

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Cottagers' Allotment Gardens Bill
(*Mr. Chaplin, Sir William Hart Dyke, Colonel Harcourt, Viscount Curzon, Mr. Charles Hall*)
c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 15 [Bill 186]

Cotton, Capt. E. T. D., *Cheshire, Wirral*
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County Courts (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Small, Mr. James E. O'Doherty, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. O'Hea*)
c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 12 [Bill 180]

Courtney, Mr. L. H. (Chairman of Committees of Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker), *Cornwall, Bodmin*
Copyhold Enfranchisement, Comm. *cl.* 11, 579
Cricklewood, Kilburn, and Harrow Road Tramways, 2R. 1760
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CREMER, Mr. W. R., *Shoreditch, Haggerston*
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Cricklewood, Kilburn, and Harrow Road Tramways Bill (by Order)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Sir Charles Forster*) *April* 16, 1755 ; Question put, and agreed to
Moved, "That the Bill be committed" (*Sir Charles Forster*)
Amendt., to leave out "committed," add "referred to a Select Committee, Five to be nominated by the House, and Four by the Committee of Selection" (*Mr. T. H. Bolton*) *v.* ; Question proposed, "That 'committed,' &c. ;" after short debate, Question put, and agreed to ; Bill committed

Criminal Lunatics—Discharge of Strain, Wilson, Longman, and Jarvis from Colney Hatch
Question, Mr. Morgan Howard ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *Mar* 30, 255

Crofters Bill—Tramways (Scotland)
Question, Mr. Mark Stewart ; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *Mar* 29, 104

Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
c. Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the said Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to other parts of Scotland" (*Mr. M'Laren*) *Mar* 29, 109 ; after debate, Question put ; A. 91, N. 287 ; M. 196 (D. L. 47)
Order for Committee read ; Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," 121
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Main Question, "That Mr. Speaker, &c." put, and agreed to ; Committee [First Night] —R.P. [Bill 118]
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Customs and Inland Revenue Bill
(*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Resolutions in Committee *April* 15
Resolutions reported, and agreed to ; Bill ordered ; read 1° * *April* 16 [Bill 190]

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Out-door Examining Officers of Customs, Question, Mr. Puleston ; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 5, 747 ; Question, Captain Cotton ; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 6, 913
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Diplomatic Service — Consular Appointments
Question, Mr. James Hutton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *April* 16, 1768

DODDS, Mr. J., *Stockton*
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DOUGLAS, Mr. A. AKERS-, *Kent, St. Augustine's*
Copyhold Enfranchisement, Comm. *add. cl.* 1282
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Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order Bill
(*Lord Sudeley*)
l. Read 2a * *Mar* 26 (No. 38)
Committee *; Report *Mar* 29
Read 3a * *Mar* 30

Drill Grounds Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Sandhurst*)
l. Royal Assent *Mar* 29 [49 *Vict.* c. 5]

Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment) Bill (*Colonel Hughes, Mr. Boord, Mr. Baggallay, Mr. Norris, Colonel Duncan*)
c. Committee *; Report *April* 7 [Bill 123]
Considered *April* 8, 1144
Read 3° * *April* 14
l. Read 1a * (*Earl Stanhope*) *April* 15 (No. 77)

Duchy of Cornwall—Compensations
Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *Mar* 26, 32

DUCKHAM, Mr. T., *Herefordshire, Leominster*
Highways Acts Amendment, Comm. 1878

DUFF, Mr. R. W. (Civil Lord of the Admiralty), *Banffshire*
Greenwich Age Pensions, 105;—Memorial of Pensioners, 437
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DUNCOMBE, Mr. A., *York, E.R., Howdenshire*
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Zebehr Pasha, Res. 711

DUNRAVEN, Earl of
Great Britain—Cultivation of Tobacco, 72, 75

DYKE, Right Hon. Sir W. H., *Kent, Dartford*
Palace of Westminster—House of Commons—Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms — The Tariff, 737, 1631

Eastern Roumelia — Treaty of Berlin—Art. XVII.
Question, The Marquess of Salisbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Earl of Rosebery) *April* 13, 1419 [See title *Europe* (*South-Eastern*)]

Education Department (*England and Wales*)
Appointments to Professorships, Question, Mr. Buchanan; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 1, 457
Elementary Education—Admission of Children to Schools, Question, Sir Charles Forster; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *April* 5, 739; — *Reports of the Royal Commission*, Question, Mr. Edward Russell; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair), Sir R. Assheton Cross *April* 1, 448
School Attendance, Question, Sir Charles Forster; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *April* 6, 917;— *The English and Scotch Codes*, Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *April* 15, 1620
School Examinations, Question, Colonel Gunter; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *April* 13, 1429
The London School Board Election — Scale of Costs, Question, Mr. W. H. Smith; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *April* 1, 439

EDWARDS-MOSS, Mr. T. C., *Lancashire, S.W., Widnes*
Infants, Comm. *cl.* 5, Amendt. 1873

EGYPT
Administrative Reforms — Sir H. Drummond Wolff's Reports, Questions, Sir George Campbell, Mr. Hanbury; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *Mar* 29, 88
Disposal of the Suakin and Berber Railway Material, Question, Mr. John O'Connor (Tipperary, S.); Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) *April* 16, 1770

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EGYPT—*cont.*
Finance, &c. — Conversion of the Daira and Domain Loans, Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *April* 1, 435
The Egyptian Exiles, Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *Mar* 29, 103

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Rayleigh*)
l. Read 2ª, after debate *Mar* 26, 3 (No. 25)
Moved, "That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee" *Mar* 26, 9; after short debate, Motion withdrawn
Referred to a Select Committee *April* 1

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Viscount Bury*)
l. Read 2ª *Mar* 26, 8 (No. 40)
Moved, "That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee"; after short debate, Motion withdrawn
Referred to a Select Committee *April* 1

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Houghton*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *Mar* 26 (No. 48)
Read 2ª, after short debate *April* 1, 419
Referred to a Select Committee *April* 1

Electric Lighting Acts (1882) Amendment (Nos. 1, 2, & 3) Bills
(*The Lord Rayleigh, The Viscount Bury, The Lord Houghton*)
l. Select Committee nominated *April* 12; List of the Committee, 1287
Moved, "That all petitions presented before the 15th instant against the said Bills be referred to the Committee, and that the petitioners have leave to be heard before the Committee by their counsel, agents, and witnesses in support of the allegations of their petitions" (*The Lord Grimthorpe*)
Amendt. to leave out all after the first ("Committee") insert ("and that the Committee have leave to hear such of the petitioners as they think fit by their counsel, agents, and witnesses" (*The Earl of Camperdown*)
After short debate, Amendt. to leave out ("before the 15th instant") insert ("on or before the first sitting day after the recess at Easter" (*The Lord Houghton*); after short debate, on Question ? agreed to; Motion, as amended, agreed to
Ordered, That all petitions presented on or before the first sitting day after the recess at Easter against the said Bills be referred to the Committee, and that the Committee have leave to hear such of the petitioners as they think fit by their counsel, agents, and witnesses

Electric Lighting—Legislation
Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 2, 604

Elgin, Earl of
Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland), 2R. 79; Comm. 1292

Elliot, Hon. A. R. D., *Roxburgh*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. 120; *cl.* 6, 779; *cl.* 11, 871

Elliot, Hon. H. F. H., *Ayrshire, N.*
Railways (Scotland)—The Girvan and Portpatrick Railway, 1628

Ellis, Mr. J. E., *Nottingham, Rushcliffe*
Places of Worship Sites, 2R. 652

Emigration of Orphan and Deserted Children
Question, Mr. Seton-Karr; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) *April* 12, 1307
[See title *Colonies—State-Directed Emigration*]

Employers' Liability Act (1880) Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Dr. Commins, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Jesse Collings*)
c. Select Committee, Mr. Giles *disch.*, Mr. Forwood *added Mar* 30

Enfield, Viscount
Army (Education)—Royal Military Colleges, Sandhurst and Woolwich—Report of Board of Visitors, 1150

Esher, Lord (Master of the Rolls)
Law of Evidence Amendment, Report, 78

Esmonde, Sir T. G., *Dublin Co., S.*
Army—Grievances of Quartermasters, 1309
Customs Department—Outport Clerks, 87
Post Office — Parcel Post—Pay of Carriers, 1428
Post Office (Ireland)—Letter Carriers — Case of Samuel Lyons, 1617

Esslemont, Mr. P., *Aberdeenshire, E.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. 117; *cl.* 1, 170; *cl.* 6, 778, 797; *cl.* 8, 826; *cl.* 12, 933, 939
Merchant Shipping — Loss of the "Enterprize," 1429

Europe (South-Eastern)
Bulgaria, Question, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *April* 9, 1177
Eastern Roumelia — Treaty of Berlin — Art. XVII., Question, The Marquess of Salisbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Earl of Rosebery) *April* 13, 1419

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Europe (South-Eastern)—cont.
Greece and Turkey — The Russian Fleet, Question, Viscount Cranbrook; Answer, The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Earl of Rosebery) *April* 1, 417; Questions, Mr. Bourke, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce), 434; Question, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *April* 5, 747; — *Action of the Powers*, Question, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 16, 1772

Everett, Mr. R. L., *Suffolk, Woodbridge*
Police Constables' Pensions, 2R. 1580

Ewing, Sir A. Orr, *Dumbarton*
Church of Scotland (Disestablishment and Disendowment), Res. 302, 310, 311

Farquharson, Dr. R., *Aberdeenshire, W.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. 120; *cl.* 6, 795; *cl.* 13, 1741

Fergusson, Right Hon. Sir J., *Manchester, N.E.*
Church of Scotland (Disestablishment and Disendowment, Res. 337
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. 133; *cl.* 10, 843; *cl.* 11, 873; *cl.* 3, 1728
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1095
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 677

Field, Admiral E., *Sussex, Eastbourne*
Admiralty — Education of Naval Executive Officers, 915
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Portugal—Arrest of Missionaries at Madeira, 1310
Trade and Commerce—Newhaven and Dieppe Boats, 254

Finch-Hatton, Hon. M. E. G., *Lincolnshire, Spalding*
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1364
Parliament—Business of the House — Debate on Government of Ireland Bill, 1315

Finlay, Mr. R. B., *Inverness, &c.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 166; *cl.* 6, 518; *cl.* 13, 1743

Fires Prevention (Metropolis) Bill
(*Mr. Howard Spensley, Colonel Duncan, Mr. Spicer, Mr. Isaacs*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 14 [Bill 184]

Fisheries (East Coast) — Encroachment of Belgian Trawlers
Question, Sir Edward Birkbeck; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 1, 451

FitzGerald, Lord
- Ireland—Special Protective and Repressive Criminal Legislation, Motion for an Address, 1615
- Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment, 2R. 1292, 1295
- Zebehr Pasha, Res. 712

FitzGerald, Mr. R. U. P., *Cambridge*
- Merchant Shipping — Telegraphic Communication with the Goodwin Sands, 1770
- Police Forces Enfranchisement, 2R. 370
- Poor Relief (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 2, 874

Flynn, Mr. J. C., *Cork, N.*
- Post Office (Ireland)—Postal Arrangements at Rockchapel, Co. Cork, 1620

Foreign Affairs—Secretary of State (*see* Rosebery, Earl of)

Foreign Affairs—Under Secretary of State (*see* Bryce, Mr. J.)

Foreign Trade Competition—Appointment of Diplomatic Agents Abroad
- Amendt. on Committee of Supply *April* 2, To leave out from "That," add "in the opinion of this House, the Government ought to consider the desirability of appointing properly qualified Diplomatic Agents in all Foreign capitals or seats of Government, for the express purpose of promoting the extension of British commerce" (*Mr. M'Laren*) *v.* 609; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put, and agreed to

Forster, The Right Hon. W. E.—His Death
- Observations, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), Sir Michael Hicks-Beach *April* 6, 975; Observations, The Lord President of the Council (Earl Spencer), The Earl of Iddesleigh, Earl Cowper *April* 9, 1155

Forster, Sir C., *Walsall*
- Committee on Public Petitions—Report—Alleged Forgery of Signatures to Petition from East Cavan, 447
- Education (England and Wales)—Elementary Education—Admission of Children to Schools, 739
  - School Attendance, 917

Fortescue, Earl
- Post Office—Metropolitan Police—Telegrams, 428

Forwood, Mr. A. B., *Lancashire, Ormskirk*
- International Penny Postage, Res. 291
- Merchant Shipping—Loss of the "Oregon," Cunard Mail Steamer, 33
- Navy—Armed Cruisers and Transports, 1629
- Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 1832

Foster, Dr. B., *Chester*
- Allotments and Small Holdings, 2R. 400

Fowler, Sir R. N., *London*
- Army—War Balloons, 1433
- City of London—Salary of the Common Serjeant, 750
- Copyhold Enfranchisement, Comm. 1283
- Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 11, 872
- Infants, Comm. 1750
- Marriages (Hours of Solemnization), Consid. 218
- Merchant Shipping—Seamen in the Port of London, 1769
- Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 1843, 1865
- Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1713

Fowler, Mr. Henry H. (Secretary to the Treasury), *Wolverhampton, E.*
- Allotments Extension Act, 1883—The Charities of Kirton and Swineshead, Lincolnshire—Action of the Trustees, 260
- Bankruptcy (Office Accommodation) Act (1885) Amendment, 2R. 896
- Civil Service Volunteers, 1437
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- Commissioners of Woods and Works—Forest of Dean, 911
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- Customs Department—Questions
  - Customs Establishments — Redundant Clerks, 440
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- Inland Revenue—Questions
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  - Government Loans for Irish Purposes, 1840-1886, 909, 910
  - Irish Church Funds, Solvency of, 1311, 1312
  - Judicature Act—Court Fees, 1304
  - Loans to Landlords and Occupiers—Return of Amounts Outstanding and Remissions, 253
  - Phœnix Park (Dublin)—The New Barracks, 456
  - Piers and Harbours—Howth Harbour, 726, 727;—Kingstown East Pier, 97
  - Registration of Voters Act, 1885—Postage of Requisition Forms, 431
  - Tramways and Public Companies Act—The West Clare Railway, 746

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    Duke of York's Column, 738
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  Post Office (Telegraph Department)—Questions
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Friendly Societies—A Royal Commission
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Friendly Societies (Transmission of Money) Bill (*Viscount Curzon, Sir E. Birkbeck, Mr. Fellowes, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Tomlinson*)
  c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 7 [Bill 168]

FRY, Mr. T., *Darlington*
  Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 660
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  Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Comm. 1146; Report, Amendt. 1420

GASKELL, Mr. C. G. MILNES-, *York, W.R., Morley*
  Quarter Sessions (Boroughs), 2R. 388

GENT-DAVIS, Mr. R., *Lambeth, Kennington*
  Post Office—Registered Telegraphic Addresses—Messrs. J. & W. Judge, Kennington, 29

GIBB, Mr. T. E., *St. Pancras, E.*
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  Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1406, 1414

GILHOOLY, Mr. J., *Cork, W.*
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GILL, Mr. H. J., *Limerick*
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GLADSTONE, Right Hon. W. E. (First Lord of the Treasury), *Edinburgh, Mid Lothian*
  Act of Union, Reprint of the, 1773, 1774
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GLADSTONE, Mr. H. J. (Financial Secretary to the War Department), *Leeds, W.*
- Army — Army Appropriation Accounts — Chelsea In-pensioners, 13
  - Pensioners—Case of John Gorman, of Mallow, 1305

Glebe Loans (Ireland) Acts Continuance Bill (*The Lord President*)
l. Royal Assent *Mar* 29 [49 *Vict.* c. 6]

GOLDSMID, Sir J., *St. Pancras, S.*
- Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 6, 800
- Highways Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1879
- Inland Revenue—Property and Income Tax—Building Societies, 432
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GORST, Sir J. E., *Chatham*
- Greenwich Age Pensions, 105
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- Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 190; *cl.* 6, 538, 564
- Fettes Scheme, Motion for an Address, 225
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- Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1458, 1476

GOURLEY, Mr. E. T., *Sunderland*
- Navy—Torpedo Boats, 1300
- Transfer of Land and House Property, 106

Government of Ireland Bill (*Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Attorney General*)
c. Moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the provision for the future Government of Ireland" (*Mr. Gladstone*) *April* 8, 1036
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. J. Chamberlain*); Motion agreed to; Debate adjourned [First Night]

Government of Ireland Bill—cont.
Debate resumed [Second Night] *April* 9, 1181; after long debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Lord Randolph Churchill*); after further short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed [Third Night] *April* 12, 1316; after long debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Sir William Harcourt*); Question put, and agreed to; Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed [Fourth Night] *April* 13, 1439; after long debate, Question put, and agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1° *
2R. deferred *April* 14, 1568 [Bill 181]

GOWER, Mr. G. G. L. (Lord of the Treasury), *Stafford, N.W.*
- Palace of Westminster—Questions
  - Galleries of this House — Members of Colonial Legislatures, 743, 1174
  - House of Commons—The Lobby, 28;—Safety Matches in the Smoking Room, 1165
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- Ireland—Policy of the Government, 2, 3
- Islands of the South Pacific—New Hebrides—Alleged Occupation by France, 11
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Greenwich Hospital Funds
Observations, Captain Price *Mar* 26, 50; short debate thereon

Greenwich Hospital School
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Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 186; *cl.* 6, 538; *cl.* 8, Amendt. 827; *cl.* 10, 846
Infants, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1872
Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 1839

Grey, Mr. A. H. G., *Northumberland, Tyneside*
Church Patronage, 2R. 1014
Ireland—Government Loans for Irish Purposes, 1840-1886, 908

Grimston, Viscount, *Hertfordshire, St. Alban's*
Copyhold Enfranchisement, Comm. *cl.* 10, Amendt. 578; *cl.* 15, Amendt. 580, 581; *cl.* 31, Amendt. 582; *add. cl. ib.*, 1279, 1281, 1282; Consid. Amendt. 1563, 1564
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Lunacy Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 2, 42; Amendt. 238
Marriages (Hours of Solemnization), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1286

Gunter, Colonel R., *Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash*
Education Department—School Examinations, 1429
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Haldane, Mr. R. B., *Haddington*
Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 1837

Hall-Marking of Watch Cases — The Watch Trade,
Questions, Mr. Kimber; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 9, 1168, *April* 15, 1624

Halsbury, Lord
Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (Nos. 1, 2, & 3), Bills referred to a Select Committee, 1291
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Harbours of Refuge (*Great Britain and Ireland*)
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    [See title *Peace Preservation* (*Ireland*) *Act*, 1881]

Ireland (*Repression of Crime*) — *Coercion Bills*
  Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for a Return, from 1830 to the present time, of all Coercion Bills (by whatever title they may be called) passed by Parliament, and by whom they were proposed : Also, a Return of agrarian crime committed 18 months previous to, and 18 months after, the passing of the said Acts" (*The Lord Oranmore and Browne*) *April* 13, 1421 ; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

Ireland—Special Protective and Repressive Criminal Legislation
  Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for a Return, from 1830 to the present time, of all special protective and repressive criminal legislation applicable to Ireland (by whatever name called), with the dates and names of proposers: Also, a Return (so far as may be practicable) of all crimes, specifying conspiracy, sedition, murder, offences against the person, agrarian offences, arson, intimidation, &c., committed 12 months next before, and next after, the passing of the Act" (*The Lord Oranmore and Browne*) *April* 15, 1614 ; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

Ireland—The Legislative Union—Petition of General Synod of the Church of Ireland presented
  Moved, "That the said Petition be read by the Clerk" (*The Earl of Courtown*) *April* 5, 720 ; Motion agreed to ; Petition read accordingly, and ordered to lie on the Table

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l. Read 1ª* (*Lord FitzGerald*) *Mar* 30 (No. 51)
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l. Presented; read 1ª*, and referred to the Examiners *April* 16 (No. 83)

Local Government Provisional Orders Bill (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 12 [Bill 173]

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 12 [Bill 174]

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 12 [Bill 172]

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 12 [Bill 175]

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 3) Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 12 [Bill 176]

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 4) Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 12 [Bill 177]

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 5) Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 12 [Bill 178]

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c. Ordered; read 1º* *April* 12 [Bill 179]

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3R. put off *April* 9, 1154 (No. 64)
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l. Read 2ª *April* 8, 1032 (No. 47)
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Read 3ª* *April* 15

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Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) *Mar* 26, 13

Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill [H.L.] (*The Duke of Saint Albans*)
l. Presented; read 1ª* *April* 6 (No. 62)

Marriages (Attendance of Registrars) Bill (*Sir Richard Webster, Sir Richard Cross, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Baggallay*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Mar* 29, 210
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Illingworth*); after short debate, Motion agreed to; Debate adjourned

Marriages (Hours of Solemnization Bill (*Mr. Carvell Williams, Mr. Richard, Mr. Ince*)
c. Considered; read 3° *Mar* 29, 218 [Bill 62]
l. Read 1ª* (*Lord Monk-Bretton*) *Mar* 30
Read 2ª, after debate *April* 6, 905 (No. 52)
Committee *April* 12, 1285
Report * *April* 13 (No. 73)
Read 3ª* *April* 15

Marriages Validity Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord Bishop of Carlisle*)
l. Royal Assent *Mar* 29 [49 *Vict.* c. 3]

Marriott, **Right Hon. W. T.**, *Brighton*
Cricklewood, Kilburn, and Harrow Road Tramways, 2R. 1762, 1763

Mason, **Mr. S.**, *Lanark, Mid*
Parliament — Public Business — Estimates, Motion for a Select Committee, 42
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Mather, **Mr. W.**, *Salford, S.*
International Penny Postage, Res. 280
Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 1857

Maxwell, **Sir H. E.**, *Wigton*
Army (South Africa)—Barracks at Capetown, 436
Civil Service—Grievances of the Writers, 432
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. 135; *cl.* 1, 476; *cl.* 6, 564; *cl.* 8, 824, 830, 834; *cl.* 12, 928
Scotland—Representation of the People—Polling Places, 104

Medical Act (1858) Amendment Bill (*Mr. Morgan Howard, Sir Trevor Lawrence, Mr. Tomlinson, Mr. Addison*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *April* 14 [Bill 183]

Medical Act (1858) Amendment Bill (*Sir Lyon Playfair, Mr. Mundella, The Lord Advocate*)
c. Motion for Leave (*Sir Lyon Playfair*) *April* 5 898; Motion agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1°* [Bill 163]

Mellor, **Right Hon. J. W.** (Judge Advocate General), *Grantham*
Copyhold Enfranchisement, Comm. *cl.* 10, 578; *cl.* 15, 581; *add. cl.* 1280, 1281

Merchant Shipping (*Questions*)
Advance Notes to Seamen, Question, Mr. Norris; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 2, 603
English Seamen, Question, Mr. Macdonald Cameron; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 5, 751
Seamen in the Port of London, Question, Sir Robert Fowler; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 16, 1769
Employment of Foreign Sailors, Question, Mr. Addison; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 9, 1166
Boats of Passenger Ships, Questions, Captain Price, Mr. Macfarlane; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *Mar* 30, 256

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Merchant Shipping—cont.
Chain Cables and Anchors—Testing, Question, Mr. Hickman; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 5, 757
Robbery of Foreign Seamen after being Paid Off, Question, Captain Verney; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 13, 1435
Loss of the "Enterprize," Question, Mr. Esslemont; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 13, 1429
Loss of the "Oregon," Cunard Mail Steamer, Question, Mr. Forwood; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *Mar* 26, 33; Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 1, 442
Telegraph Communication with the Goodwin Sands, Question, Mr. Fitzgerald; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 16, 1770

METROPOLIS
City of London Court, Question, Lord Algernon Percy; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 13, 1437
Dynamite Outrages, 1884 — *The Reward*, Question, Viscount Newark; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *Mar* 26, 29
The Duke of York's Column, Question, Sir R. Assheton Cross; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 5, 738
The Parks — Improvement of Hyde Park, Question, Mr. Cremer; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 5, 743

METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS, Chairman of (*see* MCGAREL-HOGG, Sir J. M.)

Metropolitan Board of Works—Thames Crossings below Bridge
Questions, Mr. Ritchie; Answers, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) *April* 12, 1297
Thames Conservancy Board—Ferry at Greenwich, Question, Mr. Ernest Denison; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 9, 1158

Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Report * *April* 7 [Bill 132]
Considered * *April* 8
Read 3° * *April* 9
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Thurlow*) *April* 12 (No. 71)

Metropolitan Fire Brigade Expenses Bill (*Mr. Kimber, Mr. Vanderbyl*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 7 [Bill 167]

Metropolitan Police (Stations) Bill (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 7 [Bill 169]
Read 2° *April* 15, 1748
Committee; Report; read 3° *April* 16

MIDLETON, Viscount
Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment, 2R. 1294

MILLTOWN, Earl of
Ireland—Prisons—Discontinuance of Naas Gaol, 1752, 1753
Ireland—Repression of Crime, Motion for an Address, 1423
Law of Evidence Amendment, Report, Amendt. 77
Lunacy Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 27, 236, 241; Report, *cl.* 67, Amendt. 904
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Poor Relief (Ireland), 2R. 1157

MILVAIN, Mr. T., *Durham*
Law and Police—Treatment of Prisoners, Durham, 1308

Mines
Royal Commission on Accidents in Mines—The Report, Question, Sir R. Assheton Cross; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *Mar* 26, 37; Question, Mr. A. J. Williams; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 5, 748
Mines Regulation Act Amendment, Questions, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Tomlinson; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Broadhurst) *April* 7, 1031
Specimens of Miners' Safety Lamps, Question, Mr. Burt; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 6, 913

MOLLOY, Mr. B. C., *King's Co., Birr*
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 694

MONK-BRETTON, Lord
Marriages (Hours of Solemnization), 2R. 905, 906; Comm. *cl.* 1, Amendt. 1285, 1286

MONTAGU, Mr. S., *Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel*
Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1676

MORE, Mr. R. J., *Shropshire, Ludlow*
Land Cultivation, 2R. 1610
Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1684

MORGAN, Right Hon. G. Osborne (Under Secretary of State for the Colonies), *Denbighshire, E.*
Africa (South)—Questions
Administration of Justice in Stellaland, 736
Basutoland—Sale of Spirituous Liquors, 752
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MORLEY, Right Hon. J. (Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland), *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*
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Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1263, 1267, 1269, 1271, 1272, 1340, 1414
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Morley, Mr. A. (Secretary to the Treasury), *Nottingham, E.*
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Mowbray, Right Hon. Sir J. R., *Oxford University*
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Ireland—Sea and Coast Fisheries—Scarcity of Fish on the Northern Coast, 597

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Loss of the "Oregon," Cunard Mail Steamer, 33, 442
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Municipal and Parliamentary Elections—Post Office Servants
Question, Mr. A. J. Balfour; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 12, 1303

Municipal Franchise (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Johnston, Mr. De Cobain*)
c. Bill withdrawn * *April* 13 [Bill 75]

Murdoch, Mr. C. T., *Reading*
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 675

National Debt Bill
(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 16 [Bill 191]

National Provident Insurance
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Administration of the Dockyards, Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 1, 455
The Director of Naval Construction, Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert); Observations, Lord George Hamilton *April* 2, 605
Plumbers of the Royal Navy, Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 5, 733
Education of Naval Executive Officers, Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 6, 915
Egyptian Medals for the Royal Marine Battalion, Question, Captain Price; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 9, 1167
Armed Cruisers and Transports—the Return, Question, Mr. Forwood; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 15, 1629
The Royal Marines—The Board of Admiralty—Staff Appointments, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 16, 1765

H.M.S. "Albatross"—Explosion of a Nordenfelt Gun, Question, Lord Charles Beresford; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 12, 1306
H.M.SS. "Impérieuse and Warspite," Question, Sir John Commerell; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 6, 916
Naval Engineer Students — Report of the Director of Naval Education, Question, Sir Thomas Brassey; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 9, 1170
Naval Pensions—William Kempton, Question, Mr. Leicester; Answer, The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. R. W. Duff) *April* 5, 741
Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers—The Capitation Grant, Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 2, 604
State of the Navy, Question, Observations, Viscount Sidmouth, The Earl of Ravensworth; Replies, The First Lord of the Admiralty (The Marquess of Ripon), The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Earl Granville) *Mar* 30, 243; Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 9, 1176
Torpedo Boats, Question, Mr. Gourley; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *April* 12, 1306

NEWARK, Viscount, *Notts, Newark*
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Common Juries (Remuneration), 2R. 209
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Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1198
Poor Relief (Ireland), 2R. 567; Comm. *cl.* 3, Amendt. 879, 880, 881, 885, 890
Post Office (Ireland)—The Athenry and Tuam Day Mail, 1770

Nonconformist Bodies, Transfer of Property of
Question, Mr. Jones-Parry; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 16, 1766

NORRIS, Mr. E. S., *Tower Hamlets, Limehouse*
Merchant Shipping—Advance Notes to Seamen, 603

NORTHBOURNE, Lord
Great Britain—Cultivation of Tobacco, 76

NORTHBROOK, Earl of
Ireland—Repression of Crime, Motion for an Address, 1422, 1423

North Metropolitan Tramways (No. 1) Bill (by Order)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Sir Charles Forster*) *April* 16, 1764
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. T. H. Bolton*); after short debate, Motion withdrawn
Original Question put; Bill read 2°

NORTON, Lord
Colonies, Motion for an Address, 593

O'BRIEN, Mr. W., *Tyrone, S.*
Army—Pensioners—Case of John Gorman, of Mallow, 1305
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Police Forces Enfranchisement, Comm. *cl.* 1, 1559; *cl.* 2, Motion for reporting Progress, *ib.*

O'CONNOR, Mr. A., *Donegal, E.*
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O'Connor, Mr. J., *Kerry, S.*
Act of Union, Reprint of the, 1773, 1774
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O'Connor, Mr. J., *Tipperary, S.*
Egypt—Suakin and Berber Railway, 1770
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Ireland, State of—The Loyalist Meeting in Cork—Alleged Assault on Mr. Robert Walsh, T.C., 441
Police Forces Enfranchisement, 2R. 368; Comm. *cl.* 1, 1558

O'Connor, Mr. T. P., *Liverpool, Scotland*
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O'Doherty, Mr. J. E., *Donegal, N.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 195 *cl.* 6, 554

O'Doherty, Dr. K. I., *Meath, N.*
Palace of Westminster — Galleries of this House—Members of Colonial Legislatures, 742
Poor Relief (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 2, Amendt. 875, 878; Schedule, 891

O'Hanlon, Mr. T., *Cavan, E.*
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 678, 679, 681

O'Hea, Mr. P., *Donegal, W.*
International Penny Postage, Res. 288
Poor Relief (Ireland), 2R. 574; Comm. Schedule, Amendt. 890

O'Kelly, Mr. J., *Roscommon, N.*
Act of Union, Reprint of the, 1773
Poor Relief (Ireland), Comm. Schedule, 893

O'Neill, Hon. R. T., *Antrim, Mid*
Building Societies Act, 1874 — Advances on Property in Ireland by Building Societies, 1165
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1093

Oranmore and Browne, Lord
Ireland — Repression of Crime, Motion for an Address, 1421, 1423
Ireland — Special Protective and Repressive Criminal Legislation, Motion for an Address, 1614, 1617

Ordnance — Surveyor General (*see* Woodall, Mr. W.)

Palmer, Mr. C. M., *Durham, Jarrow*
Foreign Trade Competition, Res. 613, 614, 628

Parish Churches Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Bishop of Peterborough*)
l. Select Committee nominated *Mar* 30; List of the Committee, 248

Parker, Mr. C. S., *Perth*
Church of Scotland (Disestablishment and Disendowment), Res. 333
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 465

Parliament
LORDS
Private Bills—Standing Order, No. 128
Memorandum respecting Standing Order, No. 128. (No interest out of capital to be paid on calls) laid on the Table
Moved, "That the same be printed" (*The Earl of Redesdale, Chairman of Committees*) *April* 2, 583; Motion agreed to (No. 56)
Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether it is expedient to amend Standing Order No. 128, and, if so, in what respect; and That no Bill containing provision for payment of interest out of capital during construction of works be read a second time before the Report of the said Committee has been laid upon the Table" (*The Lord Houghton*) *April* 12, 1291; Motion agreed to
Select Committee nominated *April* 15; List of the Committee, 1613

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills
Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92. and 93. be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Easter, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the recess *April* 16
The Easter Holidays, Observation, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Earl Granville) *April* 12, 1295
[House adjourned on Friday *April* 16 to Thursday *May* 6]

COMMONS—
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
Controverted Elections
Certificates and Reports of the Election Judges
Norwich City Mar 30, 248
Ipswich April 2, 596
Kennington Division of the Borough of Lambeth April 8, 1034
Tower Hamlets, Stepney Division April 12, 1296
Gloucester County, Southern Division April 14, 1568

New Writs
New Writ (*Barrow in Furness*)
Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new writ for the election of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the

[*cont.*

Parliament — Commons — *New Writs* (*Barrow in Furness*)—cont.

Borough of Barrow in Furness, in the room of David Duncan, Esq., whose election has been declared void" (*The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Arnold Morley*) *Mar* 29, 81; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Lewis*); after short debate, Question put, and negatived; original Question put, and agreed to

Ipswich Writ

Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of Two Members to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Ipswich, in the room of Henry Wyndham West, esquire, whose Election hath been determined to be void" (*The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Arnold Morley*) *April* 7, 979; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Brand*); after short debate, Question put; A. 16, N. 175; M. 159 (D. L. 69); original Question put, and agreed to

New Writs — Sessional Orders — Notice of Motion for the Issue of a Writ, Question, Mr. Lewis; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) *April* 5, 750

Resolved, "That, in all cases where the Seat of any Member has been declared void on the ground of corrupt practices or illegal practices, no Motion for the issue of a New Writ shall be made without two days' previous Notice in the Votes, and that such Notice be considered before Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions" (*Mr. Attorney General*) *April* 7

Public Petitions

Committee on Public Petitions — The Report — Alleged Forgery of Signatures to Petition from East Cavan, Question, Mr. Clancy; Answer, Sir Charles Forster; Question, Major Saunderson [no reply] *April* 1, 446

Procedure

Unopposed Returns, Questions, Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Raikes; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *Mar* 29, 107

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Resolved, That whenever the House shall meet at Two of the clock, the Sittings of the House shall be held subject to the Resolutions of the House of the 30th day of April 1869 (*The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Arnold Morley*) *April* 5

Government of Ireland Bill

Moved, "That the Order of the Day relating to the Government of Ireland have precedence of the Notices of Motions and the other Orders of the Day" (*Mr. Gladstone*) *April* 13, 1438; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to

[*cont.*

Parliament — Commons — *cont.*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE AND PUBLIC BUSINESS

Questions, Mr. Carbutt, Mr. Macfarlane, Sir John Gorst; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 16, 1772; — *Government of Ireland*, Ministerial Statement, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *Mar* 29, 109; — *The Debate on the Government of Ireland Bill*, Questions, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 12, 1313; — *Questions relating to the Civil Service*, 1880-86, Questions, Mr. Leake, Mr. Puleston; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 5, 755; — *Crofters* (*Scotland*) (*No.* 2) *Bill*, Question, The Marquess of Stafford; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 5, 760; Questions, Mr. A. J. Balfour, Sir George Campbell, Lord Randolph Churchill; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 15, 1630; — *Railway and Canal Traffic Bill*, Question, Sir Joseph Pease; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 5, 760; — *The Oaths Bill*, Question, Mr. Serjeant Simon; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 6, 918

Public Business

Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day

Moved, "That the Notice of Motion relating to the Government of Ireland have precedence of the Orders of the Day" (*Mr. Gladstone*) *April* 8, 1035; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to

Arrangement of Public Business — Ministerial Statement

Standing Order No. 20, appointing the Committee of Supply to be the First Order on Friday, read *April* 9, 1179

Moved, "That the said Standing Order be suspended" (*The First Lord of the Treasury, Mr. W. E. Gladstone*); after short debate, Motion agreed to

Sale and Purchase of Land (*Ireland*) *Bill*

Standing Order No. 20 suspended *April* 16

Ordered, That the Notice of Motion for leave to bring in a Bill relating to the Sale and Purchase of Land in Ireland have precedence of the Orders of the Day (*Mr. Gladstone*)

Palace of Westminster

Galleries of this House — Colonial Ministers and Members of Colonial Legislatures, Question, Dr. O'Doherty; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 5, 742; Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 9, 1174

Members' Seats in this House, Observations, Mr. Mitchell Henry; Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, Mr. Speaker *April* 7, 978; Questions, Mr. Bartley, Mr. T. M. Healy,

[*cont.*

PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—*Palace of Westminster*—cont.

Mr. Mitchell Henry; Answers, Mr. Speaker, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 12, 1315

Safety Matches in the Smoking Room, Question, Mr. Pyne; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 9, 1165

The Lobby, Question, Mr. Brunner; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *Mar* 26, 28

Ventilation of this House, Questions, Mr. Duncombe, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answers, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 6, 914;—*Sewer Gas*, Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 15, 1627

The Telegraph Office in this House, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 13, 1427

Parliament—Board of Supervision (Scotland)

Moved for, "Returns of the names and designations of the members of the Board of Supervision in Scotland, distinguishing such as are members ex officio: of the number of meetings of the Board relating to the Poor Law held during the years from 1876 to 1885, both inclusive; and, of the number of members present at each such meeting (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 304, of Session 1876)" (*Mr. Preston Bruce*) *Mar* 30, 261; after short debate, Motion agreed to

Parliament—Public Business—The Estimates

Amendt. on Committee of Supply *Mar* 26, To leave out from "That," add "a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Estimates, in conjunction with the Official Heads of Departments, before they are submitted to the House" (*Mr. John Wilson, Edinburgh*) *v.*, 38; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put, and agreed to

Parliament — Palace of Westminster — Refreshment Charges in the House of Commons

Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Chairman (Sir William Hart Dyke) *April* 5, 737

Select Committee appointed, "to inquire into the Refreshment Charges and Arrangements of the House" (*Mr. Biggar*) *April* 13

Observations, Sir William Hart Dyke; Reply, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 15, 1631

Parliament—The Right Hon. Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., Clerk of this House

Letter received by Mr. Speaker from the Right Hon. Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., the Clerk of this House *April* 15, 1631

[*cont.*

Parliament—The Right Hon. Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., Clerk of the House—cont.

Moved, "That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the Right Honourable Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., on his retirement from the office of Clerk of this House, the assurance of its cordial respect and regard, together with its warm acknowledgment for the prolonged and singularly valuable services which, alike by his pen, his action, and his ever ready advice, he has rendered to this House, and to its Members, in the conduct of their business; joining therewith the expression of its earnest hope that the retirement rendered necessary by his indefatigable exertions may serve effectually for the restoration of his health" (*Mr. Gladstone*) *April* 16, 1774; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to, nemine contradicente

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF LORDS

Representative Peers for Scotland

Mar 26—Earl of Mar, *v.* Viscount Strathallan
Earl of Morton, *v.* Lord Saltoun

New Peers

April 1—The Right Honourable Richard de Aquila Grosvenor (commonly called Lord Richard de Aquila Grosvenor), created Lord Stalbridge of Stalbridge in the county of Dorset
The Right Honourable William Baron Kensington, in that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland created Baron Kensington of Kensington in the county of Middlesex

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF COMMONS

New Writs Issued

Mar 29—*For* Borough of Barrow-in-Furness, *v.* David Duncan, esquire, void Election

Mar 30—*For* Halifax, *v.* The Right Hon. James Stansfeld, President of the Local Government Board

April 2—*For* the City of Norwich, *v.* Harry Bullard, esquire, void Election

April 7—*For* the Borough of Ipswich, *v.* Henry Wyndham West, esquire, one of Her Majesty's Council learned in the Law, and Jesse Collings, esquire, void Election

April 13—*For* North-East Lancashire (Clitheroe Division), *v.* Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, baronet, Chancellor of the Duchy and County Palatine of Lancaster

April 14—*For* Bradford (Central Division), *v.* The Right honble. William Edward Forster, deceased

New Members Sworn

Mar 29—Sir William Cunliffe Brooks, baronet, *Chester County* (*Altrincham Division*)

April 5—The Right honble. James Stansfeld, *Halifax*

[*cont.*

Parliament—Commons—*New Members Sworn*—cont.
April 8—Samuel Smith, esquire, *Flint County*
Samuel Hoare, esquire, *Norwich*
William Sproston Caine, esquire, *Barrow-in-Furness*
April 16—Charles Dalrymple, esquire, *Borough of Ipswich*

Parliamentary and Municipal Registration
Questions, Sir Julian Goldsmid, Mr. Thorold Rogers; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 5, 754

Parliamentary Elections—Lists of Voters—St. Pancras Parish
Question, Mr. Baggallay; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) *April* 12, 1300

Parliamentary Franchise Bill [Bill 124]
(*Mr. Moulton, Mr. A. Acland, Mr. Dillwyn*)
c, Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *April* 2, 697
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Sir Henry James*); after short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned

Parnell, Mr. C. S., *Cork*
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1124, 1192, 1195, 1278, 1279, 1336, 1391
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 693
Police Forces Enfranchisement, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1559
Right Hon. Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., Clerk of this House, 1778
Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 1852

Paulton, Mr. J. M., *Durham, Bishop Auckland*
Strikes and Labour Organizations in the United States, 1436

Paymaster General (*see* Thurlow, Lord)

Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, 1881
Observations, Mr. Lewis; Reply, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) *April* 15, 1634; short debate thereon

Pease, Sir J. W., *Durham, Barnard Castle*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 6, 562, 781; *cl.* 11, 871
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 661
Parliament—Business of the House, 760
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, 2R. 650

Pease, Mr. A. E., *York*
Morocco—Slavery at Tangier—Case of Fattah, 99

Peel, Right Hon. A. W. (*see* Speaker, The)

Percy, Lord A., *St. George's, Hanover Square*
Army — Compulsory Retirement of Majors, 1625
Civil Service Volunteers, 1437
Metropolis—City of London Court, 1437

Picton, Mr. J. A., *Leicester*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 462; *cl.* 11, 855
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 694
Revenues and Endowments of Religious Bodies, 1629

Places of Worship Sites Bill
(*Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Borlase, Mr. Burt, Mr. M'Arthur, Mr. Henry Wilson*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *April* 2, 652; Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Beresford Hope*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2° [Bill 136]

Playfair, Right Hon. Sir Lyon (Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education), *Leeds, S.*
Charity Commissioners — Public Charities at Bampton, 725
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 13 72
Education Department—Questions
  Attendances, 917; — English and Scotch Codes, 1620
  Elementary Education—Admission of Children to Schools, 739; — Royal Commission, 448
  Ireland—Science and Art Directory — Rule 12, 1430
  London School Board Election — Scale of Costs, 440
  School Examinations, 1429
Medical Act (1858) Amendment, Motion for Leave, 898, 899

Plunket, Right Hon. D. R., *Dublin University*
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1134
International and Colonial Copyright, 2R. 1144

Police Constables' Pensions Bill [Bill 28]
(*Lord Claud John Hamilton, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Raikes, Sir George Russell*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *April* 14, 1570
After short debate, Amendt. to leave out from "That," add "statutory pensions granted by

[cont.

Police Constables' Pensions Bill—cont.
Parliament to the Police ought not to be provided by imposing fresh burdens on the ratepayers" (*Mr. Stanley Leighton*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after further short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson*); Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned

Police Forces Enfranchisement Bill
(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord Claud Hamilton, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Mr. Cowen, Sir George Russell*)
c. Read 2°, after debate *Mar* 31, 356 [Bill 3]
Committee—R.P. *April* 5, 897
Committee—R.P. *April* 13, 1550

Police Superannuation Bill
Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 1, 435

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)
Boarding-out of Pauper Children, Question, Mr. William Davies; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) *April* 9, 1177
Death from Over-Feeding, Question, Viscount Barrington; Answer, Lord Sudeley (for the Local Government Board) *April* 2, 594
Depression of Trade and Industry—Outdoor Relief, Observations, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 2, 644; short debate thereon
Election of Guardians—Nottingham, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) *April* 15, 1621
Emigration of Orphan and Deserted Children, Question, Mr. Seton-Karr; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) *April* 12, 1307

Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill (*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 29 [Bill 155]
Read 2°, after short debate *April* 1, 566
Committee; Report *April* 5, 873
Considered; read 3° *April* 7, 1030
l. Read 1ª * (*Earl Spencer*) *April* 8 (No. 66)
Read 2ª, after short debate *April* 9, 1155
Committee * *April* 12 (No. 74)
Report * *April* 15
Read 3ª * *April* 16

Portugal — Arrest of Missionaries in Madeira
Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *April* 12, 1310

POSTMASTER GENERAL (*see* WOLVERTON, Lord)

POST OFFICE (*Questions*)
Remuneration of Rural Postmen, Question, Mr. Deasy; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 5, 723
St. Pancras District Post Office—"Extra Duty," Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 5, 739
The Metropolitan Police—The Telegraphs, Question, Earl Fortescue; Answer, The Postmaster General (Lord Wolverton) *April* 1, 428
The Parcel Post—Pay of Carriers, Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 13, 1428
The Postal Union, Question, Mr. Hutton; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 5, 728

Telegraph Department
Prepayment of Messages to the Continent, Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 9, 1164
Registered Telegraphic Addresses—Messrs. J. & W. Judge, Kennington, Question, Mr. Gent-Davis; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *Mar* 26, 29; Questions, Mr. Lane, Viscount Grimston; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *Mar* 30, 252
Insufficiently Addressed Telegrams, Question, Mr. Houldsworth; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 15, 1624

Post Office—Universal International Penny Postage
Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived for the Government of this Country to open negotiations with other Governments, with a view to the establishment of a Universal International Penny Postage system" (*Mr. Henniker Heaton*) *Mar* 30, 261
Amendt. To leave out from "Country," add "to take the necessary steps with a view to the establishment of a Penny Postage system throughout the British Empire" (*Mr. James Hutton*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put, and agreed to
Main Question put; A. 127, N. 258; M. 131 (D. L. 52)

Post Office Sites Bill
(*Mr. Spencer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Read 2°, and committed to a Select Committee *April* 15, 1747 [Bill 148]

POWELL, Mr. F. S., *Wigan*
Church Patronage, 2R. 1015
France—Condition of the Agricultural and Industrial Classes—Report of the Commission, 14
Ipswich Writ, 982, 983

Power, Mr. P. J., *Waterford, E.*
Poor Relief (Ireland), 2R. 574

Prevention of Hydrophobia Bill
(*Mr. Macfarlane, Dr. Cameron, Mr. M'Iver, Dr. Farquharson*)
c. Ordered ; read 1° * *April* 1 [Bill 162]

Price, Captain G. E., *Devonport*
Army—Egyptian Medals for the Royal Marine Battalion, 1167
Greenwich Hospital Fund, 50
Greenwich Hospital School, 257
Merchant Shipping—Boats of Passenger Ships, 256
Regulation of Theatres, 30

Prime Minister (*see* Gladstone, Right Hon. W. E.)

Prison Officers' Superannuation Bill
(*Sir Edward Reed, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Ordered ; read 1° * *Mar* 29 [Bill 154]
Read 2°, after short debate *April* 1, 576
Committee * ; Report *April* 2
Read 3° * *April* 5
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Thurlow*) *April* 6 (No. 61)
Read 2ª *April* 8, 1033
Committee * ; Report *April* 9
Read 3ª * *April* 12
Royal Assent *April* 16 [49 *Vict.* c. 9]

Prisons (*England and Wales*)
Canterbury Gaol—Case of William Joslin, Question, Mr. W. H. James ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 1, 450
Clerks in Local Prisons, Question, Mr. Bartley ; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 13, 1436
The New Prison at Norwich, Question, Mr. Colman ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 13, 1427

Public Health Acts (Improvement Expenses) Bill (*Mr. Dodds, Sir Edward Reed, Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. William Cook, Mr. Bullard*)
c. Committee ; Report *Mar* 29, 219 [Bill 7]

Public Offices—The New Admiralty and War Office
Question, Mr. W. H. Smith ; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) *April* 1, 449 ; Questions, Mr. T. Blake ; Answers, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 13, 1428 ; *April* 15, 1627

Puleston, Mr. J. H., *Devonport*
Civil Service—Grievances of the Writers, 432
Customs Department—Examining Officers of Customs, 747
Parliament—Public Business—Questions Relating to the Civil Service, 1880-86, 756

Pyne, Mr. J. D., *Waterford, W.*
Palace of Westminster—House of Commons—Safety Matches in Smoking Room, 1165

Quarry Fencing Bill (*Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Burt, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Abraham* (*Glamorgan, Rhondda*)
c. Ordered ; read 1° * *April* 14 [Bill 185]

Quarter Sessions (Boroughs) Bill
(*Mr. Powell Williams, Mr. John Bright, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Houldsworth*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Mar* 31, 375 ; after debate, Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Hanbury*) ; Question proposed, "That 'now' &c. ;" Amendt. withdrawn ; Motion withdrawn ; Bill withdrawn [Bill 37]

Raikes, Right Hon. H. C., *Cambridge University*
Act of Union, Reprint of the, 1773
Church Patronage, 2R. 996
Infants, Comm. *cl.* 3, 1872
Parliament—Procedure—Unopposed Returns, 108
Parliament—Public Business—The Estimates, Motion for a Select Committee, 40
Right Hon. Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B., Clerk of this House, 1777

Railway and Canal Traffic Bill—Railway Passengers
Question, Sir George Campbell ; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 5, 729

Ramsay, Mr. J., *Falkirk, &c.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. 133 ; *cl.* 1, 181, 467 ; *cl.* 6, 523, 799 ; *cl.* 12, 928, 936, 938 ; Amendt. 939, 940 ; *cl.* 13, 955, 1734
Public Health Acts (Improvement Expenses), Comm. 229

Ramsden, Sir J. W., *York, W.R., Osgoldcross*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 165, 472 ; *cl.* 6, 777 ; *cl.* 11, 856, 871 ; *cl.* 13 1743

Rathbone, Mr. W., *Carnarvonshire, Arfon*
Poor Relief (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 884

Ravensworth, Earl of
Great Britain—Cultivation of Tobacco, 1287
Harbours of Refuge (Great Britain and Ireland), Address for Returns, 586
Navy, State of the, 245

Rayleigh, Lord
Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 1), 2R. 3
Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 3), 2R. 420
Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (Nos. 1, 2, & 3), Bills referred to a Select Committee, 425

REDESDALE, Earl of (Chairman of Committees)
Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (Nos. 1, 2, & 3), Bills referred to a Select Committee, 426
Parliament—Private Bills — Standing Order (No. 128), 583
Trees (Ireland), 2R. 428

REDMOND, Mr. J. E., *Wexford, N.*
Ireland—Crime and Outrage—Blowing up of the House of Robert Marshall at Londonderry, 17, 600, 601

REDMOND, Mr. W. H. K., *Fermanagh, N.*
International Penny Postage, Res. 291
Ireland — Magistracy — Mr. Frank Brook, Brookborough, Co. Fermanagh, 28, 432, 1769
Law and Police—Action of the Police at Leeds, 25
Police Forces Enfranchisement, 2R. 373, 374

REED, Sir E. J. (Lord of the Treasury), *Cardiff*
Prison Officers' Superannuation, 2R. 576

REID, Mr. H. G., *Aston Manor*
International Penny Postage, Res. 270

Religious Bodies—Revenues and Endowments
Questions, Mr. Morgan Howard, Mr. Picton; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 15, 1629

Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill (*Mr. Courtney Kenny, Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Crossley, Mr. Illingworth*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 31 [Bill 160]

Returning Officers' Charges (Scotland) Bill (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 15 [Bill 188]

Revenue and Expenditure—"The Spending Departments"
Question, Mr. Rylands; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 5, 754

RIBBLESDALE, Lord
Zebehr Pasha, Res. 703

RICHARD, Mr. H., *Merthyr Tydvil*
India—The Burmah Crown Jewels, 750

RICHMOND AND GORDON, Duke of
Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (Nos. 1 & 2), 10

RIPON, Marquess of (First Lord of the Admiralty)
Navy, State of the, 244

RITCHIE, Mr. C. T., *Tower Hamlets, St. George's*
Metropolitan Board of Works—Thames Crossings, 1297, 1298

ROBERTSON, Mr. E., *Dundee*
Church of Scotland (Disestablishment and Disendowment), Res. 319
City of London—Salary of the Common Serjeant, 749
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1515, 1516
West India Islands—St. Vincent Grammar School, 1430

ROBERTSON, Mr. J. P. B., *Bute*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 458; *cl.* 3, 491, 496; *cl.* 6, Amendt. 500, 504, 528, 539, 549, 809, 819; *cl.* 8, 828, 829, 834; *cl.* 10, 839, 843; *cl.* 12, Amendt. 922, 924, 925, 936, 947; *cl.* 13, 1739
Fettes Scheme, Motion for an Address, 226
Infants, Comm. *cl.* 3, 1873

ROGERS, Mr. J. E. Thorold, *Southwark, Bermondsey*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 203; *cl.* 6, 561, 565, 803; Amendt. 805
Dwellings for the Working Classes—Remission of Property Tax, 747
Friendly Societies—A Royal Commission, 257
Parliamentary and Municipal Registration, 755
Procedure—Unopposed Returns, 108

ROSEBERY, Earl of (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)
Eastern Roumelia, 1420
South-Eastern Europe—Greece and Turkey—The Russian Fleet, 417
Zebehr Pasha, Res. 714

Royal Family, Grants of Money to the—A Committee
Question, Mr. Howard Spensley; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *Mar* 29, 106

Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens—Kew Gardens
Extension of Hours of Opening, Question, Mr. Macdonald Cameron; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 5, 733
Increased Seating Arrangements, Question, Mr. Howard Spensley; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 6, 914
Removal of a Wall, Question, Mr. Macdonald Cameron; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 12, 1299

RUSSELL, Sir C. (Attorney General), *Hackney, S.*
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1344, 1345

[*cont.*

RUSSELL, Mr. C.—*cont.*
Law and Justice—High Court of Justice (Chancery Division)—Taxing Masters, 27
Law of Evidence in Conspiracy and Divorce, 35
Royal Courts of Justice—Attendance of Officials, 86
Local Bankruptcy Courts (Ireland), 917
Marriage Law—Civil Marriage, 13
New Writ (Barrow-in-Furness), 82
Parliament—Sessional Orders — Notice of Motion for Issue of a Writ, 750
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, 2R. 650

RUSSELL, Mr. E. R., *Glasgow, Bridgeton*
Church Patronage, 2R. 1006
Elementary Education—The Royal Commission, 448
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1488

RYLANDS, Mr. P., *Burnley*
Church Patronage, 2R. 998
Ipswich Writ, 980
Revenue and Expenditure—"The Spending Departments," 754

Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland) Bill (*Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Attorney General*)
c. Motion for Leave (*The First Lord of the Treasury, Mr. W. E. Gladstone*) *April* 16, 1778; after long debate, Question put, and agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1° * [Bill 193]

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill (*Sir Joseph Pease, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Isaac Wilson*)
c. Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendt. proposed to Question [10th March], "That the Bill be now read 2°"
And which Amendt. was, to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Addison*) *v.*; Question again proposed, "That 'now' &c.;" Debate resumed *April* 2, 645; after short debate, Question put; A. 101, N. 41; M. 60 (D. L. 59) [Bill 27]

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill (*Mr. Theodore Fry, Mr. Walter James, Mr. Dodds, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Gourley, Mr. Paulton*)
c. Committee; Report *April* 2, 655 [Bill 74]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3°" *April* 5, 898; Amendt. to leave out "now read 3°," insert "re-committed" (*Mr. Tomlinson*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn; main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 3°
l. Read 1ª * (*The Lord Bishop of Durham*) *April* 6 (No. 59)

SALISBURY, Marquess of
Burgh Police and Health (Scotland), Comm. *cl.* 14, 1149
Eastern Roumelia, 1419, 1420
Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (Nos. 1, 2, 3), Bills referred to a Select Committee), 1289

SANDHURST, Lord (Under Secretary of State for War)
Army (Annual), Comm. 907; 3R. 1284
Army (Education)—Royal Military Colleges, Sandhurst and Woolwich—Report of Board of Visitors, 1151
Contagious Diseases Acts (Repeal) (No. 2), 2R. 1151

SAUNDERS, Mr. W., *Hull, E.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 159
Law and Justice (England and Wales)—Severe Sentences—Case of Abigail Bird, 1434

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SCOTLAND—Secretary for, &c. (*see* TREVELYAN, Right Hon. G. O.)

SCOTLAND — Secretary for, &c. (*see* DALHOUSIE, Earl of)

SCOTLAND — Solicitor General for (*see* ASHER, Mr. A.)

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Criminal Law — Outrages on Lady Gordon Cathcart, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *Mar* 29, 85
Distress in the Western Islands, Question, Mr. T. Blake; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 13, 1432
Local Government—Payment of Rates in the Highlands, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *Mar* 29, 85
Poor Law—Death from Exposure of Ann Mackinnan, at Derraig, Isle of Mull, Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 12, 1301
Prisons (Scotland) Act, 1877 — Discharge of Prisoners at Barlinnie, Question, Mr. Baird; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 16, 1766

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Railways—The Girvan and Portpatrick Railway, Question, Mr. H. F. H. Elliot; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 15, 1628

Removal Terms (Burghs) (Scotland) Act (1881) *Amendment Bill*, Question, Mr. J. W. Barclay; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 5, 751

Representation of the People—Polling Places—Legislation, Questions, Mr. Macfarlane, Sir Herbert Maxwell; Answers, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *Mar* 29, 104

Tramways for Crofter Districts, Question, Mr. Mark Stewart; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *Mar* 26, 34

Education Department (Scotland)

Education of Children of Travelling Tinkers, Question, Mr. Jacks; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 14, 1569

School Accommodation—Croachie of Daviot, Inverness-shire, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *Mar* 29, 84

Fisheries (Scotland)

Beam Trawling in In-shore Waters, Question, Mr. Preston Bruce; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) *Mar* 26, 19

Fishings and Foreshores—The Return, Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 12, 1312

Sea and Coast Fisheries—The Fishermen of Ballantrae—Damage to Nets, &c. by Beam Trawlers, Question, Mr. Wason; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 12, 1301

Law and Justice (Scotland)

Exclusion of the Public from a Court of Justice in Glasgow, Question, Mr. M'Culloch; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 2, 602

Malicious Mischief—Case of William Stokes and William Macdonald, Duthil, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 9, 1175

Scotland—Church of Scotland (Disestablishment and Disendowment)

Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the Church of Scotland ought to be Disestablished and Disendowed" (*Dr. Cameron*) *Mar* 30, 293

Amendt. to leave out from "That," add "having regard to the declaration recently made by the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the appointment of a Royal Commission on the subject of Disestablishment in Scotland, to the effect that, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, 'this important question of the continuance and circumstances of the Established Church in Scotland should be left as much as possible to the spontaneous action and consideration of the Country,' this House declines

Scotland—Church of Scotland (Disestablishment and Disendowment)—cont.

to entertain a proposal for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Scottish Church until the wishes of the people of Scotland in relation thereto shall have been ascertained" (*Sir Donald Currie*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put, and agreed to

Main Question put; A. 125, N. 237; M. 112; Div. List, Ayes & Noes, 353

Scotland—Educational Endowments—The Fettes Scheme

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent to the Scheme of the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commission now lying upon the Table of the House for the management of the Fettes Endowments, Edinburgh" (*Mr. John Wilson, Edinburgh*) *Mar* 29, 219; after debate, Question put; A. 61, N. 82; M. 21 (D. L. 51)

School Board Elections (Scotland) Bill (*Mr. Shiress Will, Mr. Eugene Wason*)

c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 31 [Bill 159]
Bill withdrawn * *April* 8

School Board Elections (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Shiress Will, Mr. Eugene Mason*)

c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 8 [Bill 170]

Selborne, Earl of
Lunacy Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 27, 236; *cl.* 42, 238; *cl.* 43, 242; Report, *cl.* 3, 901
Marriages (Hours of Solemnization), 2R. 905

Selwin-Ibbetson, Right Hon. Sir H. J., *Essex, Epping*
Police Constables' Pensions, 2R. 1570; Motion for Adjournment, 1582
Police Forces Enfranchisement, 2R. 356, 374; Comm. *cl.* 1, 1555; *cl.* 2, 1559, 1560, 1562

Seton-Karr, Mr. H., *St. Helen's*
Foreign Trade Competition, Res. 631
Poor Law (England and Wales)—Emigration of Orphan and Deserted Children, 1307
State-Aided or Directed Emigration, 734

Sexton, Mr. T., *Sligo, S.*
Ireland—Questions
  Anti-Home Rule Petitions, 102
  Crime and Outrage—Alleged Attack on the Rev. Mr. Kearney, Drogheda, 259; —Blowing up of House of Robert Marshall at Londonderry, 18, 19, 601
  Government Loans for Irish Purposes, 1840-1886, 908
  Government of Ireland—Policy of the Government—Ulster Liberal Convention, 36
  Irish Church Act, 1869—The Glebe Purchasers, 96

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Loans to Occupiers and Landlords—Return of Amounts Outstanding and Remissions, 253
Magistracy—Sheriff of Galway, 21, 22
Medical Charities Act—Refusal of Medical Relief—Case of George Marton, Cashel Union, 17
Parliamentary Franchise (Ireland)—The Collector General of Rates for the City of Dublin, 92
Poor Law—Election of Guardians—Drumfin Division, Sligo Union, 448, 449
Royal Irish Constabulary—Defaulting Pensioners—Case of John Donash, 250
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Parliament—Order — Board of Supervision (Scotland), Motion for Returns, 261
Poor Relief (Ireland), 2R. 572

Shirley, Mr. W. S., *Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster*
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1100
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Rewards for Discovery of Crime, 1433
Law and Police—Sunday Trading in the East of London, 1309

Sidmouth, Viscount
Harbours of Refuge (Great Britain and Ireland), Address for Returns, 584
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Simon, Mr. Serjeant J., *Dewsbury*
Parliament—Business of the House, 918

Smith, Right Hon. W. H., *Strand, Westminster*
Contagious Diseases Acts Repeal (No. 2), Comm. 645
Education Department—London School Board Election—Scale of Costs, 439
Public Offices—New Admiralty and War Office, 449
Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 1824
Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1672, 1674

Smith, Mr. D., *Brighton*
Channel Islands—Jersey Gaol, 91

Solicitors' Annual Certificate Duty Bill
(*Mr. O'Hea, Mr. Deasy, Mr. Dwyer Gray, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Sexton*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *April* 14, 1612; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Henry H. Fowler*); Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned [Bill 133]

South Pacific, Islands of the—The New Hebrides — Alleged Occupation by France
Question, Observations, The Earl of Harrowby; Reply, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Earl Granville) *Mar* 26, 11

Spain—Commercial Negotiations
Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *April* 15, 1627

Speaker, The (Right Hon. Arthur Wellesley Peel), *Warwick and Leamington*
Common Juries (Remuneration), 2R. 210
Copyhold Enfranchisement, Consid. 1564, 1566
Cricklewood, Kilburn, and Harrow Road Tramways, 2R. 1764
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Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1113, 1117, 1230, 1259, 1278, 1279, 1550
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Spencer, Hon. C. R. (Groom in Waiting), *Northamptonshire, Mid*
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Spensley, Mr. H., *Finsbury, Central*
Royal Family, Provision for the, 106
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens — Kew Gardens—Increased Seating Arrangements, 914

Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland) Bill
(*The Earl of Elgin*)
l. Read 2ª, after short debate *Mar* 29, 79 (No. 36)
Committee *April* 12, 1291
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Read 3ª * *April* 15

STAFFORD, Marquess of, *Sutherland*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 6, Amendt. 761
Parliament—Business of the House, 760

STANHOPE, Earl of
Lunacy Acts Amendment, Report, *cl.* 42, 901

STANHOPE, Right Hon. E., *Lincolnshire, Horncastle*
Church Patronage, 2R. 1005
International and Colonial Copyright, 2R. 1144
Ipswich Writ, 984

STANSFELD, Right Hon. J. (President of the Local Government Board), *Halifax*
Highways Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 1, 1879
Parliamentary Elections—Lists of Voters—St. Pancras Parish, 1300
Poor Law (England and Wales)—Questions
  Boarding-out of Pauper Children, 1177
  Election of Guardians, Nottingham, 1621
  Emigration of Orphan and Deserted Children, 1307
Waterworks (Rating), 2R. 1029

STEVENSON, Mr. F. S., *Suffolk, Eye*
Ipswich Writ, 987

STEWART, Mr. M. J., *Kirkcudbright*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. 124 ; *cl.* 1, Amendt. 199, 205 ; *cl.* 6, Amendt. 499, 798, 802 ; *cl.* 10, 840 ; *cl.* 11, 848; *cl.* 12, 951 ; *cl.* 13, 1734
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 696
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), 3R. 898
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SUDELEY, Lord
Great Britain—Cultivation of Tobacco, 68, 75, 76, 77, 1286
Poor Law—Death from Over-Feeding, 595

Sugar Refiners, The—Deputation to the Board of Trade
Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 9, 1168

SULLIVAN, Mr. D., *Westmeath, S.*
Ireland — Magistracy — Dr. Henry, ex-J.P., Co. Tyrone, 734
  Poor Law — Deportation of Paupers from Scotland — Case of Mrs. Jane Carroll, 1158

Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879
Question, Sir John Gorst ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 1, 445

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Revenue and Expenditure—" The Spending Departments" Question, Mr. Rylands ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 5, 754
Royal Family, Grants of Money to the—A Committee, Question, Mr. Howard Spensley ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *Mar* 29, 106

SUTHERLAND, Mr. T., *Greenock*
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SWINBURNE, Sir J., *Staffordshire, Lichfield*
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TALBOT, Mr. J. G., *Oxford University*
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TANNER, Dr. C., *Cork Co., Mid*
Post Office (Telegraph Department)—Pre-payment of Letters to the Continent, 1164

Terms of Removal (Scotland) Bill
(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
c. Ordered ; read 1° * *April* 15 [Bill 187]

Thames Conservancy Board — Ferry at Greenwich
Question, Mr. Ernest Denison ; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 9, 1158

Theatres, Regulation of—Legislation
Question, Captain Price ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *Mar* 26, 30

THOMAS, Mr. A., *Glamorgan, E.*
Places of Worship Sites, 2R. 654

THOMPSON, Sir H. M. MEYSEY-, *Lincolnshire, Brigg*
Inland Revenue—Surveyors of Taxes, 31
Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 1846

THURLOW, Lord (Paymaster General)
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Harbours of Refuge (Great Britain and Ireland), Address for Returns, 585, 587
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Tithe Rent-Charge (Extraordinary) Amendment Bill (*Mr. Norton, Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Mr. Pomfret*)
c. Select Committee nominated *April* 15 ; List of the Committee, 1751

Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill
(*Mr. Stanley Leighton, Mr. Raikes, Mr. Kenyon*)
c. Read 2° *, and committed to the Select Committee on the Tithe Rent-Charge (Extraordinary) Amendment Bill

TOMLINSON, Mr. W. E. M., *Preston*
British West Indies — Convention with the United States, 88
Copyhold Enfranchisement, Comm. *add. cl.* 1283
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Infants, Comm. 1750; *cl.* 2, Amendt. 1868, 1871; *cl.* 3, Amendt. *ib.*, 1872; *cl.* 4, 1874
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Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), 3R. Amendt. 898

TOTTENHAM, Mr. A. L., *Winchester*
Army—Depôt of the Rifle Brigade, 454
Ireland—Arrears of Rent Act, 1882 — Case of Mr. Templeman, Agent to Mrs. Armstrong, 1159

Trade and Commerce
Commercial Reports of Consuls General and Consuls, Question, Mr. Lawrence Baker; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *April* 9, 1174
Publications of the Board of Trade—Issue to Chambers of Commerce, Question, Mr. F. Hardcastle; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 1, 451
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The Mineral Resources of the Country, Question, Sir Edward Watkin; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler *April* 6, 910
The Newhaven and Dieppe Boats, Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *Mar* 30, 254

Trade Marks—Legislation
Question, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) *April* 6, 914

TREASURY—First Lord (*see* GLADSTONE, Right Hon. W. E.)

TREASURY—Lord of (*see* GOWER, Mr. G. G. L.)

TREASURY—Lord of (*see* REED, Sir E. J.)

TREASURY — Financial Secretary to (*see* FOWLER, Mr. Henry H.)

TREASURY—Secretary to (*see* MORLEY, Mr. A.)

Trees (Ireland) Bill (*The Lord President*)
l. Read 2ª, after debate *April* 1, 426 (No. 42)
Committee *April* 12, 1284
Report * *April* 15 (No. 72)
Read 3ª * *April* 16 (No. 79)

TREVELYAN, Rt. Hon. G. O. (Secretary for Scotland, &c.), *Hawick, &c.*
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TYLER, Sir H. W., *Great Yarmouth*
Merchant Shipping—Loss of the "Oregon," Cunard Mail Steamer, 442

United States, Strikes and Labour Organizations in the
Question, Mr. Paulton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *April* 13, 1436

VALENTINE, Mr. C. J., *Cumberland, Cockermouth*
Africa (South)—Sale of Intoxicating Drinks in the Transkei, 23

VANDERBYL, Mr. P., *Portsmouth*
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VERNEY, Captain E. H., *Bucks, N., Buckingham*
Menai Bridge—Letting of the Tolls, 253
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VINCENT, Mr. C. E. H., *Sheffield, Central*
Admiralty—The Royal Marines, 1765
Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Militia Officers, 608
Civil Service — Employment of Discharged Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines, 1622
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Wales
Land Legislation, Question, Sir John Jenkins; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *April* 2, 607
Law and Justice — Welsh-Speaking Judges, Question, Mr. W. Abraham (Glamorgan, Rhondda); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *April* 9, 1171
Menai Bridge—Letting of the Tolls, Question, Captain Verney; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *Mar* 30, 253

WAR DEPARTMENT—Secretary of State (*see* CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Right Hon. H.)

WAR DEPARTMENT—Under Secretary of State (*see* SANDHURST, Lord)

WAR DEPARTMENT—Financial Secretary to (*see* GLADSTONE, Mr. H. J.)

WARING, Colonel T., *Down, N.*
Army (Auxiliary Forces)—The Militia and Yeomanry—Vacant Commissions, 1167
Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1085
Ireland — Crime and Outrage — Rioting at Caledon, Co. Tyrone, 745

WASON, Mr. E., *Ayrshire, S.*
Sea and Coast Fisheries (Scotland)—Fishermen of Ballantrae—Damage to Nets, &c. by Beam Trawlers, 1301

Watch Trade, The — Hall-Marking of Watch Cases
Questions, Mr. Kimber; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 9, 1168; *April* 15, 1624

Waterworks (Rating) Bill (*Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Dodds, Mr. Coddington, Sir H. Roscoe, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Picton*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *April* 7, 1027; Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months", (*Mr. Addison*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Jackson*); Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned [Bill 117]

WATKIN, Sir E. W., *Hythe*
Trade and Commerce—The Mineral Resources of the Country, 910

WATT, Mr. H., *Glasgow, Camlachie*
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Assistants of Excise, Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 12, 1312
Customs Clerks, Question, Colonel Makins; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *Mar* 26, 31
Income Tax—The Assessments, Question, Mr. Gibb; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) *Mar* 29, 95
Property and Income Tax—Building Societies, Question, Sir Julian Goldsmid; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) *April* 1, 432
Surveyors of Taxes, Question, Sir Henry Meysey Thompson; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *Mar* 26, 31

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The Sale of Stamps, Question, Mr. Bernard Kelly; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *Mar* 29, 94;—*Bill Stamps*, Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 15, 1623

WAYS AND MEANS
Considered in Committee *April* 15, 1637 — THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT
(1.) Moved, "That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, the Duties of Customs now chargeable upon Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say):
Tea . . . the pound . Sixpence"
(2.) "That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):
For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Eight Pence;
And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule B of the said Act,—
In England, the Duty of Four Pence;
In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Three Pence;
Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, and in section eight of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876,' for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds
(3.) "That it is expedient to amend the Laws relating to the Inland Revenue and Customs" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*); after long debate, Resolutions agreed to
Resolutions reported *April* 16

WEBSTER, Sir R. E., *Isle of Wight*
Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 683
Marriages (Attendance of Registrars), 2R. 210

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Burgh Police and Health (Scotland), Report, 1421

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  Great Britain—Cultivation of Tobacco, 76, 77
  Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment, 2R. 1292, 1295
  Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland), Comm. 1292

West India Islands—St. Vincent Grammar School
  Question, Mr. Edmund Robertson; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) *April* 13, 1430

West Indies, The British — Convention with the United States
  Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *Mar* 29, 88

WESTLAKE, Mr. J., *Essex, Romford*
  Infants, Comm. *cl.* 3, 1872

WHITBREAD, Mr. S., *Bedford*
  Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. 131; *cl.* 1, 479
  Government of Ireland, Motion for Leave, 1396, 1402

WILLIAMS, Mr. A. J., *Glamorgan, S.*
  Accidents in Mines Commission—The Report, 748

WILLIAMS, Mr. J. Carvell, *Nottingham, S.*
  Burials—Alleged Scandal at Tarporley, 597, 1433
  Church Patronage, 2R. 1024
  Marriages (Attendance of Registrars), 2R. 218
  Marriages (Hours of Solemnization), Consid. 218

WILLIAMS, Mr. Powell J., *Birmingham, S.*
  Quarter Sessions (Boroughs), 2R. 375, 386, 400

WILSON, Mr. H. J., *York, W.R., Holmfirth*
  Law and Justice—Law of Evidence in Conspiracy and Divorce, 34

WILSON, Mr. J., *Edinburgh, Central*
  Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 6, 556, 781
  Fettes Scheme, Motion for an Address, 219
  Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 677

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  Parliament—Public Business—The Estimates, Motion for a Select Committee, 38, 40, 49, 50
  Sale and Purchase of Land (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 1849
  Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1707

WINTERBOTHAM, Mr. A. B., *Gloucester, Cirencester*
  Allotments and Small Holdings, 2R. 404

WOLVERTON, Lord (Postmaster General)
  Post Office—Metropolitan Police—Telegrams, 429

WOODALL, Mr. W. (Surveyor General of Ordnance), *Hanley*
  Egypt—Suakin and Berber Railway, 1771

Woods and Forests, Commissioners of—The Forest of Dean
  Question, Mr. T. Blake; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 6, 911

Working Classes, Dwellings for the—Remission of Property Tax
  Question, Mr. Thorold Rogers; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *April* 5, 747

WORKS—First Commissioner (*see* MORLEY, Earl of)

WORTLEY, Mr. C. B. S., *Sheffield, Hallam*
  Church Patronage, 2R. 1021
  Copyhold Enfranchisement, Comm. *cl.* 10, 579; Consid. 1566
  Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children), 2R. 664
  Literature, Science, and Art — Sculptures at the British Museum, 452
  Police Constables' Pensions, 2R. 1581
  Police Forces Enfranchisement, 2R. 369; Comm. *cl.* 2, 1562

Zebehr Pasha
  Moved, "That the time has come when, under certain conditions, the presence of Zebehr Pasha in the Sûdan might prove valuable in the interests of Egypt and the pacification of the Sûdan provinces" (*The Lord Ribblesdale*) *April* 5, 703; after short debate, on Question? resolved in the negative

ERRATA.

Page 537, line 7 from top, *for* "the loan amounted to about £210,000," *read* "the loan outstanding amounted to about £1,269,000." Page 1241, line 3 from top, *for* "Civil Law," *read* "Civil War."

END OF VOL. CCCIV., AND THIRD VOL. OF SESSION 1886.

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